

ANTHOLOGIA SACRA;

OR,

SELECT THEOLOGICAL EXTRACTS,

ON SUBJECTS

DOCTRINAL, PRACTICAL, AND EXPERIMENTAL;

SELECTED AND ARRANGED

BY THE REV. BERNARD GILPIN, M. A.,

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AND

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HON. E. I. C. CIVIL SERVICE.

It would be an inestimable benefit, if instead of so many volumes, which require the greatest part of our lives to read, we had a summary of the choice truths of our religion, divested of needless words.

J. DESPAGNE.



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P R E F A C E.

THIS Selection owes its commencement to an idea which struck one of the Editors during a long residence in India. It occurred to him that in that country where the means of Grace are so limited, and extensive libraries not frequently to be expected, a work, embodying in one volume the views and feelings of eminent divines on the most important points of faith and practice, might be found exceedingly interesting, and indeed, by the blessing of God, extensively useful.

Further reflection, together with the encouragement he has derived from the concurrent opinion of many highly esteemed friends in England, have induced him to hope that in this country also, a work of this nature may prove acceptable to the Christian public.

The difficulties, however, attending the execution of such a plan, are more considerable than at first sight may appear.

Different persons, according to their attainments or dispositions, will be very differently affected by the same passages. What appears forcible, edifying, or interesting to one, in consequence of some peculiar circumstance, or train of thought, or feeling, may appear less so to others : nay, the same person, in different states of mind, may be affected in a very different manner or degree, by successive perusals of the same passage. Also, the force or interest of many passages is exceedingly diminished by their detachment from the context, while probably this diminution may not be duly appreciated by those to whom the context is familiar. It must also be considered, that authors capable of engaging our attention the most, frequently, by their overcharged statements or some other fault, render it difficult to select unobjectionable passages from their writings.

These, and other reasons (which the Editors feel confident will not be overlooked by candid readers) have caused no little difficulty in the compilation of the work,* and give reason to fear that, notwithstanding the care which has been bestowed upon it, its defects will be found to be considerable.

They particularly wish to direct attention to the following considerations.

They have not attempted to make a selection from the writings of Christian divines, upon all the multifarious topics connected with Christian theology; and, therefore, the following work must not be considered as intended to contain a complete system of divinity.

They have not thought it necessary to confine themselves to quotations from authors whose works they uniformly approve; nor consequently would be considered as adopting the sentiments or conclusions known to have been maintained by many of them.

They have endeavoured as nearly as possible to give the extracts with perfect correctness. A few expressions, however, have occasionally been slightly altered: sometimes when disjoined from the context, they would have rendered the passage unintelligible: sometimes, when without previous acquaintance with the peculiar circumstances of the author, they would have unjustly given an impression of undue extravagance to the sentiment: or, lastly, in a very few instances, when such expressions, being certainly unscriptural, would, had they been left unaltered, have deteriorated the character of the whole sentence. The reader who is disposed to examine the propriety of these alterations, may find examples of the second kind in some of the quotations from Luther, and of the third, in those from the Roman Catholic writer Massillon.

Their wish has been, not so much to regard the authority of great names, or to make their summary of subjects perfect, as to select useful and forcible extracts: yet at the same time they have reason to hope, that most of the principal points connected with the faith, practice, and experience of Christians, have met with a share of their attention.

* The Editors take this opportunity of returning their sincere thanks to several kind friends for their valuable assistance, especially to the Rev. E. Bickersteth, Rector of Watton.

With respect to their own private sentiments, they wish it to be understood that they have no desire to rank as the partizans of any particular school or human system of divinity ; though, from the tone and character of some of the following extracts, it must unavoidably appear that they may be regarded as such. Their deep conviction is, that here “ *we know but in part,*” and that in so small a part, that it is the highest presumption and folly, either to refuse to go as far, or to attempt to go further than the Holy Scriptures do, in the wisdom of God, direct us : for among all human infirmities none is more universal than an unhallowed curiosity and pride of reason, “ *intruding into those things which it hath not seen, and vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind.*” To a surprising degree this leaven has pervaded the writings of men justly valued not only for their learning or talents, but also for their piety ; and no extensive selection from human writings can be made, which shall not in one direction or another betray this tendency.

On this subject the Editors are anxious to submit a few remarks to the attentive consideration of the reader.

When we consider God’s infinite greatness, and the limited understanding of men, we cannot hesitate to admit that our minds are capable of receiving only a very small portion of the truth, concerning either him or his works ; nay further, we may safely assert, that there is no one doctrine revealed in the word of God, which ever by any one in this world has been, or can be, fully comprehended in all its parts and relations. Thank God, these doctrines may indeed, through his grace, be received so as both to enlighten and to convert our hearts ; we may indeed be directed and cheered by their power, and so brought to that Saviour, “ *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ;*” and to that kingdom in which “ *that which is perfect being come, that which is in part shall be done away :*” but there is not one of them which we can comprehend fully ;—not one which does not furnish questions of difficulty, no less confounding to the strongest capacity than to the weakest ; and respecting which it is most certain, that all that has ever been written in the hope of making them clearer than the Scriptures do, has been only “ *darkening counsel by words without knowledge.*”

Surely if in a more perfect state we shall be permitted to see the counsels of grace fully revealed, we shall contemplate those very doctrines, which here are the support of our faith, in their relation to eternal truth ; and be amazed not only at their magnificence, but at the

extent of our own past misconceptions respecting them, the poverty of our past ideas, the total inadequacy of our earthly powers to understand the millionth part of that comprehensive plan which reaches from eternity to eternity, and is the result of the wisdom and the power of the infinite and almighty God.

Considering these things, we should remember that it is the part of true wisdom, as well as Christian charity, to adhere with humble simplicity to Scripture in forming our own views, and to be both candid and moderate in our construction of the views of others. And it will mainly promote this candour, to remember that men ought not always to be pressed with the *apparent consequences* of their opinions, if they disclaim those consequences themselves. For (as Bishop Burnet so well observes in the Preface to his Exposition of the XXXIX Articles), “ They may think that a point of doctrine may be proved by such convincing arguments, that they may be bound to believe it, though there lie objections against it which they cannot avoid, and consequences seem to follow on it which they abhor, and are sure cannot be true, though they cannot clear the matter so well as they wish they could do.” There may be certain great principles which their minds embrace as necessary and important truths; and yet if they pursue them far, they are lost in a maze of darkness; they cannot separate them from error; they cannot see their consistency with other principles equally true and important; nay, their reason or their faith may revolt from certain consequences not in reality, though possibly in appearance, fairly deducible from them.

If they be persons whose carnal wisdom has been subdued by grace, they will be content to “ *walk by faith* ;” they will endeavour to turn to the best account the little knowledge afforded, and will wait with patience for the time when that little shall be enlarged. They will remember that God by thus “ *leading them into darkness and not into light*,” may be imparting to them an inestimable benefit, may be perfecting in an eminent degree their faith and their Christian humility—so infinitely more excellent than any gift of knowledge: according to the decision of the Supreme Lord, who hath said, “ *Verily, verily, I say unto you; he that humbleth himself as a little child, the same is the GREATEST.*”

Indeed, (as was hinted above) sound philosophy, no less than Christian humility, may direct us to this acquiescence. For every system of divinity which *can* be adopted is both imperfect, and encumbered with

difficulties. A prejudiced reasoner, confining his attention to one part, till he almost forgets its counter-part; pursuing an imagined advantage, till it involves him in fresh difficulties; or labouring to answer an objection, by advancing what is still more objectionable; will often dogmatize with most unreasonable assurance, where it would better become him to confess his own utter ignorance: but a person endued with the *meekness of wisdom*, will rather feel and confess, that though indeed the whole compass of truth as comprehended by *Him who inhabiteth eternity*, must be in all respects perfectly consistent with itself; yet the very few and scattered fragments of it which are disclosed to our view may, yea must, seem to us continually to interfere with each other, their mutual connexion or relation will be partly or entirely hidden, and unless we admit that there are whole regions of intervening truth, respecting which we know nothing at all, and so checking our carnal wisdom, seek to be established by faith, we shall soon find the light within us turned into gross darkness; we shall be bewildered and disappointed, the systems which we construct in our limited minds will be meagre, and inconsistent, alike dishonourable to God, and destitute of beneficial influence to ourselves, or to others.

Hence it is most certain that our safest and wisest course is to endeavour as much as possible to detach ourselves from the trammels of all human systems, and to follow the Scriptures alone in humble dependence on the teaching of the promised Spirit; not careful to avoid or answer difficulties which are, in fact, neither avoidable nor answerable. And though different persons who may be anxious to do this sincerely, will probably not think alike on all points, it may be assumed as certain that their points of difference will be comparatively few and small. Surely they will learn to exalt God highly, and love him ardently, to “*honour the Son as they honour the Father*,” and to rejoice in “*the fellowship of the Holy Ghost*.” They will learn to contemplate with wonder and gratitude the unspeakable love of “*God in Christ*,” and utterly to humble themselves both as mean and guilty before Him who has revealed himself, not only as their God, but as their Brother, who hath stood in their room, that He might exalt them to his. “*Redemption through his blood*” is indeed the chief point revealed and insisted on throughout the Scriptures. Let us not obscure this grand peculiarity of the everlasting Gospel; for this alone can infuse new life into our souls—this alone gives God’s mercy and his grace free course; and if thus reinstated into the favour, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, our utmost desires shall be one day perfected in glory.

The Editors, adopting a common but very convenient arrangement, have divided the work into three parts: the First, Doctrinal; the Second, Practical; the Third, Experimental.

It is a Scriptural, and therefore a true persuasion, that good^a practice is the result of right principles, and that right principles are formed by the operation of truth on the heart. There cannot, therefore, be a greater mistake than for the moralist to depreciate *faith*. Faith, so far from being nothing, is every thing; although it is assuredly true, that this influential faith is not a cold and speculative notion. We ought, therefore, to endeavour most anxiously to obtain a deep feeling of the power of the doctrines of the Gospel in our hearts. And there are few means, used in a humble dependence on Divine grace, which may more effectually promote this, than serious attention to the different ways in which devout men have expressed their different feelings and apprehensions of these doctrines.

Individuals must expect among these to meet with many things which they cannot enter into nor understand; but on this account to reject them as fallacious, must argue not only an uncandid but also a contracted mind. Let them rather seek from God a powerful impression of the truth in their own hearts—let them rather own in this “*diversity of operations*,” the power of that Spirit which “*worketh all in all*,” and when only they examine the works of God in creation, and mark the exquisite beauty, the extensive variety, the infinite wisdom, and the wonderful magnificence of the whole,—let them ask themselves this one question, Is it not reasonable to suppose that his works of grace, are at least as beautiful—as various—as unsearchable—as magnificent?

If this humble endeavour to promote these views be attended, by his blessing, with any success, the Editors will feel it an abundant recompense, and rejoice to express their unfeigned gratitude to Him.

Hertford, Nov. 24, 1831.

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TO THE BINDER.

The Two Volumes are intended to be bound together. The Binder will therefore place the Title to the Second Volume in its proper place, to precede the Second Part of the Work.

ANTHOLOGIA SACRA;

OR

SELECT THEOLOGICAL EXTRACTS.

PART I.—DOCTRINAL.

SECTION I.—*Revelation.*

The Importance of Revealed Truth.

WHAT is there which doth more highly concern men to know than God Himself? or what more glorious and excellent object could He discover than Himself to the world? There is nothing certainly which should more commend the Scriptures to us, than that thereby we may grow more acquainted with God; that we may know more of His nature, and all His perfections, and many of the great reasons of His actings in the world.

We may by them understand with safety what the eternal purposes of God were as to the way of man's recovery by the death of His Son; we may there see and understand the great Wisdom of God, not only in the contrivance of the world, and ordering of it, but in the gradual revelations of Himself to His people, by what steps He trained up His Church, *till the fulness of time was come*; what His aim was in laying such a load of ceremonies on His people, the *Jews*; by what steps and degrees He made way for the full revelation of His will to the world by speaking in these last days by His Son, after He had spoken *at sundry times and in divers manners by the prophets unto the fathers*. In the Scriptures we read the most rich and admirable discoveries of Divine goodness and all the ways and methods He useth in alluring sinners to Himself; with what majesty He commands; with what condescension He intreats; with what importunity he woos men's souls to be reconciled to Him; with what favor He embraceth; with what tenderness He chastiseth; with what bowels He pitieth those

who have chosen Him to be their God; with what power He supporteth; with what wisdom He directeth; with what cordials He refresheth the souls of such who are dejected under the sense of His displeasure, and yet their love is sincere towards Him! With what profound humility, what holy boldness, what becoming distance, and yet what restless importunity do we therein find the souls of God's people addressing themselves to Him in prayer! With what cheerfulness do they serve Him; with what confidence do they trust Him; with what resolution do they adhere to Him in all straits and difficulties; with what patience do they submit to His will in their greatest extremities! How fearful are they of sinning against God; how careful to please Him; how regardless of suffering, when they must choose either that or sinning; how little apprehensive of men's displeasure, while they enjoy the favor of God! Now all these things, which are so fully and pathetically expressed in Scripture, do abundantly set forth to us the exuberancy and *pleonasm* of God's grace and goodness towards His people, which makes them delight so much in Him, and be so sensible of His displeasure. But above all other discoveries of God's goodness, His sending His Son into the world to die for sinners is that which Scripture sets forth with the greatest life and eloquence. By eloquence, I mean not an artificial composition of words, but the gravity, weight, and persuasiveness of the matter contained in them. And what can tend more to melt our frozen hearts into a current of thankful obedience to God than the vigorous reflection of the

beams of God's love through *Jesus Christ* on us? Was there ever so great an expression of love heard of? Nay, was it possible to be imagined, that that God who perfectly hates sin should Himself offer the pardon of it, and send His Son into the world to secure it to the sinner, who doth so heartily repent of his sins, as to deny himself, and take up his cross and follow *Christ*? Well might the Apostle say, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners* (1 Tim. i. 15). How dry and sapless are all the discourses of philosophers, compared with this sentence! How jejune and unsatisfactory are all the discoveries they had of God and His goodness, in comparison of what we have by the Gospel of *Christ*! Well might Paul then say, *That he determined to know nothing but Christ, and Him crucified*. *Christ crucified* is the library which triumphant souls will be studying in to all eternity. This is the only library which is the true *ιατρειον ψυχης*, that which cures the soul of all its maladies and distempers: other knowledge makes men's minds giddy and flatulent; this settles and composes them: other knowledge is apt to swell men into high conceits and opinions of themselves; this brings them to the truest view of themselves, and thereby to humility and sobriety: other knowledge leaves men's hearts as it found them; this alters them and makes them better.

So transcendent an excellency is there in the knowledge of *Christ crucified* above the sublimest speculations in the world; and is not this an inestimable benefit we enjoy by the Scripture, that therein we can read and converse with all these expressions of God's love and goodness, and that in His own language? Shall we admire and praise what we meet with in heathen philosophers which is generous and handsome? and shall we not adore the infinite fulness of the Scriptures, which run over with continued expressions of that and a higher nature? What folly is it to magnify those *lean kine*, the notions of philosophers, and contemn *the fat*, the plenty and fulness of the Scriptures! If there be not far more valuable and excellent discoveries of the Divine nature and perfections; if there be not far more excellent directions and rules of practice in the Sacred Scriptures, than in the sublimest of

all the philosophers; then let us leave our *full ears*, and feed upon *the thin*. But certainly no sober and rational spirit that puts any value upon the knowledge of God, but on the same account that he doth praise the discourses of any philosophers concerning God, he cannot but set a value of a far higher nature on the word of God. And as the goodness of God is thus discovered in Scripture, so is His Justice and Holiness: we have therein recorded the most remarkable judgments of God upon contumacious sinners, the severest denunciations of a judgment to come against all that live in sin, the exactest precepts of holiness in the world; and what can be desired more to discover the holiness of God than we find in Scripture concerning Him? If therefore acquaintance with the Nature, Perfections, Designs of so excellent a being as God is, be a thing desirable to human nature, we have the greatest cause to admire the excellency, and adore the fulness of the Scriptures, which give us so large, rational, and complete an account of the being and attributes of God.

BP. STILLINGFLEET.

THE light of nature is never able to find out any way of obtaining the reward of bliss, but by performing exactly the duties and works of righteousness. From salvation therefore and life, all flesh being excluded this way, behold how the wisdom of God hath revealed a way mystical and supernatural, a way directing unto the same end of life, by a course which groundeth itself upon the guiltiness of sin, and through sin, desert of condemnation and death. For in this way, the first thing is the tender compassion of God, respecting us drowned and swallowed up in misery; the next is redemption out of the same, by the precious death and merit of a mighty Saviour, which hath witnessed of Himself, saying, *I am the way*; the way that leadeth us from misery into bliss. This supernatural way had God in Himself prepared before all worlds. The way of supernatural duty which to us He hath prescribed, our Saviour in the Gospel of St. John doth note, terming it by an excellency, the work of God: *this is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent*. Not that God doth require nothing unto happiness at the hands of men, saving only a naked belief (for hope and charity we may not exclude); but that without belief all

other things are as nothing, and it the ground of those other divine virtues. Concerning faith, the principal object whereof is, that eternal verity which hath discovered the treasures of hidden wisdom in Christ; concerning hope, the highest object whereof is, that everlasting goodness which in Christ doth quicken the dead; concerning charity, the final object whereof is, that incomprehensible beauty which shineth in the countenance of Christ the Son of the living God; concerning these virtues, the first of which beginning here with a weak apprehension of things not seen, endeth with the intuitive vision of God in the world to come; the second beginning here with a trembling expectation of things far removed, and as yet but only heard of, endeth with real and actual fruition of that which no tongue can express; the third beginning here with a weak inclination of heart towards Him, unto whom we are not able to approach, endeth with endless union; the mystery whereof is higher than the reach of the thoughts of men; concerning that faith, hope and charity, without which there can be no salvation; was there ever any mention made saving only in that law which God Himself hath from heaven revealed? There is not in the world a syllable muttered with certain truth concerning any of these three, more than hath been supernaturally received from the mouth of the Eternal God. Laws therefore concerning these things are supernatural, both in respect of the manner of delivering them, which is divine; and also in regard of the things delivered, which are such as have not in nature any cause from which they flow, but were by the voluntary appointment of God ordained, besides the course of nature, to rectify nature's obliquity withal.

When supernatural duties are necessarily exacted, natural are not rejected as needless. The law of God therefore is, though principally delivered for instruction in the one, yet fraught with precepts of the other also. The Scripture is fraught even with laws of nature; insomuch that Gratian, defining natural right, (whereby is meant the right, which exacteth those general duties that concern men naturally, even as they are men,) termeth natural right that which the books of the Law and the Gospel do contain. Neither is it vain, that the Scripture aboundeth with so great

store of laws in this kind; for they are either such as we of ourselves could not easily have found out, and then the benefit is not small, to have them readily set down to our hands; or if they be so clear and manifest, that no man endued with reason can lightly be ignorant of them, yet the Spirit, as it were, borrowing them from the school of nature, as serving to prove things less manifest, and to induce a persuasion of somewhat which were in itself more hard and dark, unless it should in such sort be cleared, the very applying of them unto cases particular is not without most singular use and profit many ways for men's instruction. Besides, be they plain of themselves or obscure, the evidence of God's own testimony added unto the natural assent of reason, concerning the certainty of them, doth not a little comfort and confirm the same. Wherefore, inasmuch as our actions are conversant about things beset with many circumstances, which cause men of sundry wits to be also of sundry judgments concerning that which ought to be done; requisite it cannot but seem the rule of divine law should herein help our imbecility, that we might the more infallibly understand what is good, and what evil. The first principles of the law of nature are easy; hard it were to find men ignorant of them: but concerning the duty which nature's law doth require at the hands of men in a number of things particular, so far hath the natural understanding even of sundry whole nations been darkened, that they have not discerned, no, not gross iniquity to be sin. Again, being so prone as we are to fawn upon ourselves, and to be ignorant as much as may be of our own deformities, without the feeling sense whereof we are most wretched; even so much the more, because not knowing them, we cannot as much as desire to have them taken away; how should our festered sores be cured, but that God hath delivered a law as sharp as the two-edged sword, piercing the very closest and most unsearchable corners of the heart, which the law of nature can hardly, human laws by no means possibly reach unto? Hereby we know even secret concupiscence to be sin, and are made fearful to offend, though it be but in a wandering cogitation. Finally, of those things which are for direction of all the parts of our life needful, and not impossible to be discerned by the light of nature

itself; are there not many which few men's natural capacity, and some which no man's hath been able to find out? They are, saith St. Augustine, but a few, and they endued with great ripeness of wit and judgment, free from all such affairs as might trouble their meditations, instructed in the sharpest and the subtilest points of learning, who have, and that very hardly, been able to find out but only the immortality of the soul. The resurrection of the flesh, what man did ever at any time dream of, having not heard it otherwise than from the school of nature; whereby it appeareth, how much we are bound to yield unto our Creator, the Father of all mercy, eternal thanks for that he hath delivered his law unto the world? a law wherein so many things are laid open, clear, and manifest; as a light which otherwise would have been buried in darkness, not without the hazard; or rather not with the hazard, but with the certain loss of infinite thousands of souls, most undoubtedly now saved. . . .

By Scripture it hath, in the wisdom of God, seemed meet to deliver unto the world much, but personally expedient to be practised of certain men; many deep and profound points of doctrine, as being the main original ground whereupon the precepts of duty depend; many prophecies, the clear performance whereof might confirm the world in belief of things unseen; many histories to serve as looking-glasses to behold the mercy, the truth, the righteousness of God towards all that faithfully serve, obey and honour him; yea, many entire meditations of piety, to be as patterns and precedents in cases of like nature; many things needful for explication, many for application unto particular occasions, such as the providence of God from time to time hath taken, to have the several books of His holy ordinance written. Be it then, that together with the principal necessary laws of God, there are sundry other things written, whereof we might haply be ignorant, and yet be saved. What! shall we hereupon think them needless? shall we esteem them as riotous branches, wherewith we sometimes behold most pleasant vines overgrown? Surely, no more than we judge our hands or our eyes superfluous, or what part soever; which if our bodies did want, we might notwithstanding any such defect, retain still the complete being of men. As therefore a complete man is

neither destitute of any part necessary, and hath some parts whereof, though the want could not deprive him of his essence, yet to have them, standeth him in singular stead in respect of the special uses for which they serve: in like sort, all those writings which contain in them the law of God, all those venerable books of Scripture, all those sacred tomes and volumes of holy writ; they are with such absolute perfection framed, that in them there neither wanteth any thing, the lack whereof might deprive us of life; nor any thing in such wise aboundeth, that as being superfluous, unfruitful, and altogether needless, we should think it no loss or danger at all, if we did want it. HOOKER.

Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures.

Two things are included in the expression canonical. First, the spring and original of any book, which gives it authority; and secondly, the design and end of it, which renders it canonical. For the first, it is required that it be *given by immediate inspiration from God*; without this, no book or writing can by any means, any acceptance, or approbation of the church, any usefulness, any similitude of style, or manner of writing to the books that are so, any conformity in matter or doctrine to them, have an interest in that authority that should lay a foundation for its reception into the canon. It is the impress of the authority of God Himself on any writing, or its proceeding immediately from Him, that is sufficient for this purpose. Neither yet will this alone suffice to render any revelation or writing absolutely canonical in the sense explained. There may be an especial revelation from God, or a writing by His inspiration, like that sent by Elijah unto Jehoram the king of Judah, 2 Chron. xxi. 12, which being referred only unto some particular occasion, and having thence authority for some especial end and purpose, yet being not designed for a rule of faith and obedience unto the church, may not belong unto the canon of the Scripture. But when unto the original of divine inspiration this end also is added, that it is designed by the Holy Ghost for the catholic standing use and instruction of the church, then any writing or book becomes absolutely and completely canonical.

The Jews of later ages assign some difference among the books of the Old Tes-

tament, as to their spring and original, or manner of revelation, though they make none as to their being all canonical. The book of the Law they assign unto a peculiar manner of revelation which they call פה אל פה or פנים אל פנים *mouth to mouth*, or *face to face*, which they gather from Num. xii. 8. Others of them they affirm to proceed from נבואה, or the *gift of prophecy*. Of this gift of prophecy they make many kinds or degrees, taken from the different means used by God in the application of Himself unto them, belonging to the πολυτροπία of divine revelation mentioned by the apostle, Heb. i. 1. And they divide those books into two parts, namely, the *former prophets*, containing most of the historical books after the end of the law; and the *latter prophets*, wherein they comprise the most of them peculiarly so called. The original of the remainder of them they ascribe unto *inspiration of the Holy Ghost*, calling them peculiarly *written*, by that inspiration; as though the whole canon and system of the books were not the *Scripture*, or writing, and θεοπνευστία or *divine inspiration*, the only means of their writing. But they do herein as in many other things.

The distribution of the books of the Old Testament, into the law, psalms, and prophets, was very ancient in their church. We have mention of it, Luke xxiv. 44, *that are written in the law of Moses and in the prophets, and in the psalms*, that is, in the whole canonical Scripture. And it is evident that this distribution is taken from the subject matter of those principal parts of it. This distribution they have by tradition, but not knowing, or neglecting the reason of it, they have feigned the rise of it in a different manner of revelation, and cast the particular books arbitrarily under what heads they pleased. This is evident from sundry of them which they reckon unto the "*Hagiographa*," which are with them of least esteem. But we have a more sure rule, both overthrowing that feigned distinction, and perfectly equalising all parts of divine Scripture as to their spring and original. St. Peter calls the whole, 2 Pet. i. 19, *the word of prophecy*; and, ver. 20, *prophecy*, and therefore it belongs not unto any peculiar part of it, to be given out by prophecy; which is a property of the whole. And St. Paul also terms the whole Scrip-

ture γραφαι προφητικαι, Rom. xvi. 26, *prophetical Scriptures*, or writings of the prophets. And when he demanded of Agrippa whether he believed the Scriptures, he doth it in the same manner, Acts xxvi. 27, *Believest thou the prophets?* that is, the Scriptures, written by the spirit of prophecy, or by the inspiration (1 Pet. i. 11) *of the Spirit of Christ that was in them*. God of old spake, εν τοις προφηταις, Heb. i. 1, in His revelation of Himself unto them and in them, and *equally spake* δια στοματος των αγιων των απ' αιωνος προφητων, Luke i. 70, unto them, *by the mouth of His holy prophets from the beginning*. And thus, not this, or that part, but *πασα γραφη θεοπνευστος*, 2 Tim. iii. 16, *all Scripture was given by inspiration*. And herein all the parts, or books of it are absolutely equal. And in the giving out of the whole, 2 Pet. i. 21, *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. So that whatever different means God at any time might make use of in the communication of His mind and will unto any of the prophets or penmen of the Scripture, it was this θεοπνευστία, and being acted by the Holy Ghost, both as to things and words, that rendered them infallible revealers of Him unto the church. And thus the foundation of the canonical authority of the books of the Scripture is absolutely the same in and unto them all, without the least variety, either from any difference in kind or degree. . . .

The interest of any book or writing in the canon of the Scripture accrues unto it, as hath been shown, merely from its divine inspiration, and from being given by the Holy Ghost for a rule, measure, and standard of faith and obedience unto the church. Therefore, whatever advantage or worth to commend it any writing may have, yet, if it have not the properties mentioned of divine inspiration and confirmation, it differs in the whole kind, and not in degrees only, from all those that have them. It cannot then be any part *regulæ regulantis*, but *regulatæ* at the best, not having *αυτονομίαν*, or a *self-credibility* on its own account, or *αυθενρειαν*, a *self-sufficing authority*, but is truth only materially by virtue of its analogy unto that which is absolutely, universally, and perfectly so. And this was well observed by Lindanus,* *They defile them-*

* Lindan. Panopl. Evang. l. iii. c. 4.

selves with the impiety of sacrilege (he says) *who endeavour to bring in, as it were, divers degrees into the body of the Scriptures; for by the impious discretion of human folly, they would cast the one voice of the Holy Ghost into various forms of unequal authority.* As then whatever difference there may be as to the subject-matter, manner of writing, and present usefulness, between any of the books, which being written by divine inspiration, are given out for the church's rule, they are all equal as to their canonical authority, being equally interested in that which is the formal reason of it; so whatever usefulness or respect in the church any other writing may have, it can in no way receive an interest in that, whose formal reason it is not concerned in.

DR. JOHN OWEN.

IN what manner the influence, by which the penmen of the Scriptures were directed, affected them, we pretend not fully to explain. It is enough for us to know, that thereby they were infallibly guided and determined to declare what they did not formerly know; to conceive properly of what they had formerly known; and to express their subject in terms absolutely just in themselves, and calculated to convey the truths represented to others. But so far we may conclude, that, while the penmen exercised their own reason and judgment; Psal. xlv. 1; Mark xii. 36; Luke i. 3; Acts i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 11; the Holy Ghost (1) Effectually stirred them up to write; 2 Pet. i. 21. (2) Appointed to each his proper share or subject correspondent with his natural talents, and the necessities of the church in his time; 2 Pet. i. 21; Mat. xxv. 15. (3) Enlightened their minds, and gave them a duly distinct view of the truths which they were to deliver; Jer. i. 11-16, and xiii. 9-14; Ezek. iv. 4-8; Dan. x. 1, 14; and ix. 22-27; and viii. 15-19; and xii. 8; Amos vii. 7, 8; and viii. 2; Zech. i. 19, 21, and iv. 11-14; and v. 6; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11; Eph. iii. 3, 4; John xvi. 13. Perhaps this illumination was given all at once to Paul, when caught up to the third heaven, but was bestowed gradually on the other apostles; Mark iv. 34; Luke xxiv. 17, 45; John xx. 22; Acts ii. 4, and x. 9-15, 28, 34. (4) He strengthened and refreshed their memories to recollect whatever they had seen or heard, which he judged pro-

per to be inserted in their writings; John xiv. 26; Luke i. 3; Jer. xxxi. 3. (5) Amidst a multitude of facts, he directed them to write precisely what was proper for the edification of the church, and neither more nor less; John xx. 30, 31; and xxi. 25; Rom. xv. 4; 1 Cor. x. 6-11; Rom. iv. 23, 24. (6) He excited in their minds such images and ideas as had been treasured up in their memories, and directed them to other ends and purposes than themselves would ever have done of their own accord. Thus, under inspiration, Amos draws his figures from herds, flocks, and fields; Paul makes use of his classical learning; Amos i-ix.; Acts xvii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 33; Tit. i. 12. (7) He immediately suggested and imprinted on their minds such things as could not be known by reason, observation, or information, but were matters of pure revelation; Is. xlvi. 9, 10; xli. 22, 23; and xlv. 21; whether they respected doctrines, 1 Tim. iii. 16; or facts past or future, Gen. i. ii. iii. Lev. xxvi. &c. (8) He so superintended every particular writer, as to render Himself infallible in his matter, words, and arrangements: and, by this superintending influence, made them all in connexion so write, as to render the whole Scripture, at any given period, a sufficient infallible rule to direct men to true holiness and everlasting happiness; Deut. viii. 4; Psal. xix. 7-11; cxix. and i. 2; John v. 39; Mat. xxii. 29; Luke xvi. 29, 31; Rom. xv. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 15-17; 2 Pet. i. 19. Many of the sentences recorded in Scripture are not inspired in themselves, being the words of Satan or of wicked men; but the Scripture report relative to these expressions is directed by divine inspiration.

REV. JOHN BROWN.

AND *he, casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus* (Mark x. 50). Shall we say that the Evangelist wrote without thought, when he related the man's casting away his garment, and leaping and coming to Jesus? and shall we dare to say that these things were inserted in the Gospels in vain? For my part, I believe that not one jot or tittle of the divine instruction is in vain. Are men to say that there is any thing impertinent or superfluous in the Scriptures of the Holy Spirit, though to some they may seem obscure? But we are to turn the eyes of our mind

to Him who commanded these things to be written, and seek of Him the interpretation of them. The sacred books came from the fulness of the Spirit; so that there is nothing in the Prophets, or the Law, or the Gospel, or the Apostles, which descends not from the fulness of the Divine Majesty.

ORIGEN.*

Evidences of the Inspiration of the Scriptures.

THAT our books of the Old and New Testaments, the Apocryphal Tracts being excluded from both, are of an infallible and divine original, is thus evident:

I. The subject matter of them requires a divine inspiration. The history of the creation, and part of that of the flood, &c. therein related, were known only to God. Mysteries relative to the Trinity of persons in the Godhead; the covenant of grace; the incarnation of the Son of God; His undertaking, offices, and states, and our union with Him; justification, adoption, sanctification, spiritual comfort, and eternal blessedness, in Him, are therein declared; which God only could comprehend or discover. The scheme of religion therein prescribed is so pure and benevolent, that God alone could devise or appoint it. While it represents the Most High as every where present, as infinitely perfect, powerful, wise, and good, holy, just, and true—an infinitely gracious lover of righteousness, and hater of iniquity,—as our bountiful Creator and Preserver, and as the infinitely merciful Redeemer of our souls, by the obedience and death of His only-begotten Son,—it requires us to know, believe in, and revere Him with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, as our Father, Friend, Husband, Saviour, and Portion in Christ; and confidently to depend on Him, and ask from Him whatever we need in time or eternity; and to obey Him in all that He commands, as children whom He hath begotten again to a lively hope, and established as the heirs of His everlasting inheritance. We are here taught how human nature may be truly improved and perfected,* by our receiving Jesus Christ as made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,—as an effectual principle and root of true holiness;—and by our walking in Him by faith, denying ungodliness

and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, patiently, contentedly, and cheerfully,—setting our affections upon things above, where Christ is, and through the Spirit mortifying every sinful and selfish inclination. We are taught to love our neighbours as ourselves,—perfectly fulfilling the particular duties of every relative station; and to lay aside all malice, envy, hatred, revenge, or other malevolent dispositions or passions; to love our enemies, to render good for evil, blessing for cursing, and to pray for them that spitefully use us. These laws of universal purity and benevolence are prescribed with an authority proper only to God, and extended to such a compass and degree as God alone can demand; and those sins are forbidden which God alone can observe or prohibit. The most powerful motives to duty, and dissuasives from vice, are here most wisely proposed, and powerfully urged; motives drawn from the nature, the promises, the threatenings, the mercies, and the judgments of God; particularly from His kindness in the work of our redemption, and His new covenant relations to us in Christ; and from advantages or disadvantages, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. And, while the most excellent means of directing and exciting to, and of exercising piety and virtue, are established in the most prudent forms and authoritative manner, the most perfect and engaging patterns of holiness and virtue are set before us in the example of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and of God as reconciled in Him, and reconciling the world to Himself; Exod. xx. 1-17; Lev. xviii-xx. Deut. iv-xxv. Mat. v-vii. Rom. vi. xii-xv. Gal. v. vi. Eph. iv-vi. Col. iii. iv. 1 Thess. v. Tit. ii. James i-v. 1 Pet. i-v. 2 Pet. i. 1 John i-v. &c. &c.

II. The manner in which these subjects are exhibited in the Scriptures is evidently divine;—wise, condescending, and yet majestic. The discoveries have been gradual, as men stood in need of them, or were in a proper condition to receive them; Gen. iii. ix. xii. xvii. &c. Heb. i. 1. The principal points; as of God's new covenant grant of Himself to sinful men; His full satisfaction in and with Christ as our Mediator; and the law of the ten commandments; were declared from heaven with uncommon solemnity; Mat. iii. 17; and xvii. 5; Exod. xx. 1-18, &c. And while these and other similar truths are an-

* Haldane's Evid. and Auth. of Div. Rev. i. 146.

nounced in a style the most plain and simple, there appears therein something astonishingly sublime and majestic. While the dictates are authorised with a *thus saith the Lord*, the very style, particularly in Scripture songs, Job, Psalms, Lamentations, and Isaiah, and in our Saviour's discourses, &c. is at once surprisingly suited to the dignity of the Author, the nature of the subject, and the condition of the persons addressed.

III. The manifest scope of the Scriptures is to render sin loathsome and hated, and to promote holiness and virtue—to humble men, and reform them from their beloved lusts and sinful practices, and to exalt and glorify God to the highest. No good angel or man could dare to personate God in the manner of the Scriptures: nor could bad angels or men publish, and so warmly inculcate, what is so remarkably contrary to their own vicious inclinations and honor. It therefore remains that God alone must be the Author and Inditer of them.

IV. Notwithstanding the dictates of Scripture are so extremely contrary to the natural inclinations of mankind, and were published without any concert by various persons, of very different conditions, and in different ages and places, yet such is the marvellous harmony of all the parts, in their whole matter and scope, as irrefragably demonstrates that these penmen must all have been directed by the same Spirit of God. One part of our Bible is so connected with, and tends to the establishment of another, that we cannot reasonably receive any part without receiving the whole. In the New Testament we have the historical narrative of the fulfilment of the typical and verbal predictions of the Old. In both Testaments, the subsequent books, or subsequent parts of a book, are connected with that which went before, as a narrative of the execution of a scheme begun, or of the fulfilment of a prophecy declared. If we receive the history, we must also receive the prediction. If we admit the prediction, we must believe the history. To a diligent searcher of the Scriptures, it cannot fail to occasion a most pleasant astonishment, to find every where the same facts supposed, related, or prepared for; the same doctrines of a gracious redemption through Jesus Christ exhibited, or supposed to be true; the same rules or exemplifications of piety

and virtue, and motives thereto; the same promises of mercy, or threatenings of just misery, to persons, societies, or nations, exhibited without a single contradiction. When there is an appearance of contradiction, it will be found that the different passages do not respect the same thing or person, in the same respect, and in the same circumstances of time, place, or manner; and so there is no contradiction at all.

V. The manifest character of the penmen farther evinces the divine original of the Scriptures. They every where discover the utmost candour and disinterestedness: they every where candidly publish the infirmities, or even faults of themselves, their friends, and nation. None of them ever gained any thing in this world by their work but trouble and vexation: and, according to their own principles, they could obtain nothing in the next but everlasting destruction, if they indulged themselves in any imposture. The matter and manner of their work infinitely transcended their abilities. Setting their predictions aside for a moment, how could men of the best education, and especially men of no education, form such exalted schemes of sense, piety, and virtue? Or how could wicked men, inspired by Satan, publish and prosecute such a scheme of mystery, holiness, and morality? Such is the character of Jesus Christ, drawn by the four Evangelists, with every mark of simplicity and candour, and in which ignominious suffering is made a leading article, that the delineation thereof, and that too by persons of no uncommon knowledge, without a real and exactly answerable model, would, to every unbiassed freethinker, appear more incredible and impossible than even the incarnation, obedience, and death of the Son of God, therein attested, however astonishing.

VI. The providence of God has, in a most marvellous manner, preserved the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments from being lost or corrupted. While perhaps millions of other books, once of considerable fame in the world, and which no one sought to extirpate, are lost and forgotten, the Scriptures, though more early written, and though Satan and his agents unnumbered have hated them, and sought to cause their memory to perish from among men, or to corrupt them, still

remain, and remain in their purity. In great wisdom and kindness, God, for their preservation, ordered an original copy to be laid up in the holy of holies; Deut. xxxi. 26; and that every Hebrew king should write but a copy for himself; Deut. xvii. 18; and appointed the careful and frequent reading of them, both in private and public. With astonishing kindness and wisdom has He made the contending parties who had access to the Scriptures—such as the Jews and Israelites, the Jews and Samaritans, the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Jews and Christians, and the various parties of Christians—mutual checks upon each other for almost three thousand years past, that they might not be able either to extirpate or to corrupt any part of them. When the Christians had almost utterly lost the knowledge of the Hebrew originals, God, by His providence, stirred up the Jewish rabbins to an uncommon labor for preserving them in their purity, by marking the number of letters, and how often each was repeated in their Masoras. By what tremendous judgments did He restrain and punish Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syro-Grecian king; Dioclesian, the Roman emperor; and others who attempted to destroy the copies of Scripture, in order to extirpate the Jewish or Christian religion! And He has bestowed amazing support and consolation on such as have risked or parted with their lives rather than deny the dictates of Scripture, or in the least contribute to their extirpation or misinterpretation. By quickly multiplying the copies or the readers of the Scriptures, He rendered it impossible to corrupt them in any thing important, without causing the corruption all at once to start up into every copy dispersed through the world, and into the memories of almost every reader;—than which nothing could be more absurd to suppose. Nay, it is observable that, of all the thousands of various readings which the learned have collected, not one in the least enervates any point of our faith or duty towards God or man.

VII. Multitudes of miracles, which only the infinite power of God could effect, have been wrought for the confirmation of the doctrines and facts mentioned in the Scriptures, and for evincing the divine mission of the principal publishers thereof. The wisdom and goodness of God required Him, especially when, in the days of Moses

and Christ, He was establishing a new form of worship, to mark the important declarations of His will with some distinguishing characteristics, awakening to consideration. Nothing appears more proper for this end than a series of uncontrolled miracles which no power could check, and which supported nothing but what was agreeable to reason, so far as it could conceive of it. Neither reason nor experience can admit that the infinite wisdom and goodness of God could permit one, much less multitudes, of uncontrolled miracles to be wrought for the confirmation of falsehood. But the miracles wrought in confirmation of the Scriptures have every favorable circumstance that could be wished. Their number was almost beyond reckoning, and all of them calculated to answer some great and benevolent end. According to the nature of the broken law, many of those wrought by Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, were tremendous and dreadful. According to the nature of the gospel which they published, the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ and his Apostles were generally of a benevolent nature and tendency. Moreover, most of the miracles mentioned in Scripture were performed in so public a manner, that both friends and foes had the fullest access to a thorough examination of their nature and certainty. Most of them were wrought when the concurrent circumstances of Providence loudly called mankind to observe and examine them. Most of them—as the passage of the Hebrews through the Red Sea and through Jordan; the forty years' sustenance of the people in the Arabian desert, by manna from heaven, and water from a rock; the stoppage or retrograde motion of the sun; the feeding of thousands with a few loaves and fishes; and the raising of dead persons—were of such a nature, that nothing less than absurdity itself can suppose the senses of the witnesses to have been deceived, or that any power less than divine could have produced them. Besides, all these miracles were wrought in confirmation of a religion the most holy, pure, and benevolent; and most of them by persons who were eminent patterns of virtue. And that such miracles were wrought, is in part attested by the inveterate enemies thereof, whether Jews or heathens.

VIII. The project of reforming man-

kind by the Scriptures, and the manifest success thereof, is a continued miraculous proof of their divine original. What, but a certain evidence of his divine commission could have made Moses risk his character—that on the sixth day of the week, the whole Hebrew nation in the wilderness should always find manna sufficient for two days, and that the sixth year should always produce a double crop; and, on that supposition, enact a standing law, that they should never attempt to gather manna on the seventh day, or to cultivate their fields on the seventh year. Without certain assurance of divine protection from their inveterate enemies on every hand, on those occasions, could he ever have required that all the males able to walk should, three times every year, leave their homes, and assemble to keep the sacred festivals near the middle of their country? Without manifest warrant from God, could he ever have hoped that there would be a sufficiency of males in Aaron's family to execute the priesthood for all Israel, free from all those blemishes which he marks out as excluding from that office? Without this, could he ever have hoped that the small country of Canaan could afford sustenance for his numerous nation, while they were debarred from so many kinds of eatables, and were required to give yearly so much of the product to the Lord?—The project of Christianity, and its success, are still more astonishing. Nothing less than a certain warrant and almighty influence from God could effect the one or the other. How is it possible that a few men, weak or villanous, without the smallest assistance from worldly influence, could ever form a scheme to reform the whole world from principles and practices deep rooted in their inclination, and firmly established by extensive custom, by long confirmed laws, and the high and universal authority of nations,—by mere declarations of what they thought true?—nay, by what they knew to be falsehood, if they were impostors! How could villains, or even the weakest, choose for their hero One who had been always contemned, and had lately been crucified between thieves as a noted malefactor, by the common consent of His own countrymen?—One who, if he was not God in our nature, had abused His disciples' confidence, and decoyed them into a train of temporal and eternal miseries!—One who had never

encouraged them to hope for any thing in this world, in following Him, but crosses, hatred, reproach, imprisonment, tortures, and death;—nor, if they indulged themselves in a fraudulent prosecution of their cause, for any thing in the future state but everlasting destruction! How stupendous, and absolutely incredible, that a few villanous projectors of reformation should begin their work, a few weeks after, in the very place where, and among the very multitude by whom, Jesus their hero had been ignominiously crucified; and should in the most public and undaunted manner, in the face of danger and death, avow Him to be the Son of God; and to have risen from the dead, ascended to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God; that amidst the deepest poverty, cruel hatred, calumnious reproach, and inhuman persecution from enemies, they should with unwearied zeal and cheerfulness, carry on their project, never appearing to covet any outward honor or wealth; and that they should form a system of doctrines and morals, infinitely superior, in sense and dignity, to all the productions of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and other renowned doctors of the heathen world! How astonishing is it that these few preachers, without the smallest encouragement from earthly powers, should so triumph over the craft, the rage, and power of the infuriated Jews; triumph over the pride, the policy, and power of the Roman empire, when at its full strength and maturest sagacity; over the pride of learning, and the obstinacy of ignorance, hatred, prejudice, and lust; over the hardened inclinations, deep-rooted customs, and long fixed laws of Jews and heathens; and that, contrary to every temptation from outward advantage, nay, notwithstanding every conceivable form of opposition, the gospel should, within a few years after Christ's ascension, be preached in almost every corner of the Roman empire and the countries adjacent; and that multitudes, at the hazard of every temporal loss or punishment from men, should readily believe, constantly adhere to, and cheerfully and strictly practise the same! and it is equally astonishing that, for more than seventeen hundred years, notwithstanding innumerable persecutions, together with the wickedness of professors, and the inconceivable villanies or base in-

difference of the clergy, this project has been more or less successful in reforming the hearts and lives of multitudes in almost every nation of importance under heaven.

IX. Nothing more clearly demonstrates the divine authority of the Scriptures than the exact fulfilment of the typical and verbal predictions therein exhibited, in the most circumstantial manner, hundreds or thousands of years before that fulfilment took place, or there was the smallest appearance of it. Predictions (especially as above circumstantiated) necessarily imply a looking with certainty through an infinity of possible events, and seeing and determining what shall certainly happen, and what not. Such foresight and determination can only take place in the omniscient and almighty Governor of the world, who alone can *declare the end from the beginning*. To mark the all-seeing Jehovah, the Author of Scripture, its pages are crowded with predictions, the exact fulfilment of which is recorded in the inspired and other histories written since the events took place. Almost every historical passage in our Bible is a narrative of something antecedently foretold. The New Testament is little else than a representation of the fulfilment of the types and predictions of the Old, relative to Jesus Christ and His gospel church. Nay, the histories of churches and nations, from the beginning to the end of the world, do, to a judicious observer, represent little more than the fulfilment of Scripture predictions, as to the families of Adam and Noah; the Canaanites, Amalekites, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Philistines, Egyptians, Ethiopians, Syrians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Tartars, including Goths, Huns, and Turks; and especially the Jews, Jesus Christ, the New Testament church, and Antichrist; as shall be hereafter manifested. This proof drawn from the fulfilment of predictions increases in evidence more and more as that fulfilment takes place and is observed. The dispersion and misery of the Jewish nation, so long continued, or so often repeated; the progress and continuance of the gospel among the Gentiles; the long continued dominion of the popes, and the partial revolt from it at the Reformation; the past and present condition of the Turkish empire; the present state of Assyria, Chal-

dea, Arabia, Phenicia, Canaan, Egypt, &c. in exact correspondence to Scripture predictions, are standing testimonies of the divine original of our Bibles, no less conclusive and striking than if we had miracles wrought every day.

X. Though the above arguments are sufficient to silence gainsayers, and to produce a rational conviction that the Scriptures are of divine original and authority, it is only the effectual application of them to our mind, conscience, and heart, in their self-evidencing divine light and power, which can produce a cordial and saving persuasion that they are *indeed the word of God*. But, when thus applied, this word brings along with it such light, such authority, and such sanctifying and comforting power, that there is no shutting our eyes nor hardening our hearts against it; no possibility of continuing stupid and unconcerned under it: but the whole faculties of our soul are necessarily affected with it, as indeed marked with divine evidence, and attended with almighty power; 1 Thess. i. 5, and ii. 13; John vi. 63.

REV. J. BROWN.

The Authority of Scripture, its Authenticity being acknowledged.

Now we hazard the assertion, that, with a number of professing Christians, there is not this unexcepted submission of the understanding to the authority of the Bible; and that the authority of the Bible is often modified, and in some cases superseded by the authority of other principles. One of these principles is the reason of the thing. We do not know if this principle would be at all felt or appealed to by the earliest Christians. It may perhaps by the disputations or the philosophising among converted Jews and Greeks, but not certainly by those of whom Paul said, *that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called*. They turned from dumb idols to serve the living and the true God. There was nothing in their antecedent theology which they could have any respect for: nothing which they could confront, or bring into competition with the doctrines of the New Testament. In those days, the truth as it is in Jesus came to the mind of its disciples, recommended by its novelty; by its grandeur; by the power and recency of its evidences; and, above

all, by its vast and evident superiority over the fooleries of a degrading Paganism. . . . But we are in different circumstances. To us, these discoveries, rich and splendid as they are, have lost the freshness of novelty. The Sun of Righteousness, like the sun in the firmament, has become familiarised to us by possession. In a few ages, the human mind deserted its guidance, and rambled as much as ever in quest of new speculation. It is true, that they took a juster and a loftier flight since the days of Heathenism. But it was only because they walked in the light of revelation. They borrowed of the New Testament without acknowledgment, and took its beauties and its truths to deck their own wretched fancies and self-constituted systems. In the process of time, the delusion multiplied and extended. Schools were formed, and the ways of the Divinity were as confidently theorised upon, as the processes of chemistry, or the economy of the heavens. Universities were endowed, and natural theology took its place in the circle of the sciences. Folios were written, and the respected luminaries of a former age poured their *à priori* and their *à posteriori* demonstrations on the world. Taste, and sentiment, and imagination, grew apace; and every raw untutored principle which poetry could clothe in prettiness, or over which the hand of genius could throw the graces of sensibility and elegance, was erected into a principle of the divine government, and made to preside over the counsels of the Deity. In the mean time, the Bible, which ought to supersede all, was itself superseded. It was quite in vain to say that it was the only authentic record of an actual embassy which God had sent into the world. It was quite in vain to plead its testimonies, its miracles, and the unquestionable fulfilment of its prophecies. These mighty claims must lie over, and be suspended, till we have settled—what? the reasonableness of its doctrines. We must bring the theology of God's Ambassador to the bar of our self-formed theology. The Bible, instead of being admitted as the directory of our faith *upon its external evidences*, must be tried upon the merits of the work itself; and if our verdict be favorable, it must be brought in, not as a help to our ignorance, but as a corollary to our demonstrations. . . .

Now we do not condemn the exercise

of reason in matters of theology. It is the part of reason to form its conclusions, when it has data and evidences before it. But it is equally the part of reason to abstain from its conclusions, when these evidences are wanting. Reason can judge of the external evidences for Christianity, because it can discern the merits of human testimony; and it can perceive the truth or the falsehood of such obvious credentials as the performance of a miracle, or the fulfilment of a prophecy. But reason is not entitled to sit in judgment over those internal evidences, which many a presumptuous theologian has attempted to derive from the reason of the thing, or from the agreement of the doctrine with the fancied character and attributes of the Deity. One of the most useful exercises of reason is, to ascertain its limits, and to keep within them; to abandon the field of conjecture, and to restrain itself within that safe and certain barrier which forms the boundary of human experience. . . . After we have established Christianity to be an authentic message from God upon those historical grounds on which the reason and experience of man entitle him to form his conclusions, nothing remains for us but an unconditional surrender of the mind to the subject of the message. . . .

Let us go back to the first Christians of the Gentile world. . . . They were translated at once from the absurdities of Paganism to that Christianity which has come down to us, in the records of the evangelical history, and the epistles which their teachers addressed to them. They saw the miracles; they acquiesced in them, as satisfying credentials of an inspired Teacher; they took the whole of their religion from His mouth; their faith came by hearing, and hearing by the words of a divine Messenger. This was their process, and it ought to be ours. We do not see the miracles, but we see their reality through the medium of that clear and unsuspicious testimony which has been handed down to us. We should admit them as the credentials of an embassy from God. We should take the whole of our religion from the records of this embassy; and, renouncing the idolatry of our own self-formed conceptions, we should repair to that word, which was spoken to them that heard it, and transmitted to us by the instrumentality of

written language. The question with them was, What hearest thou? The question with us is, *What readest thou?* . . .

But something more remains to be done. The mind may have discernment enough to acquiesce in the speculative justness of a principle; but it may not have vigour or consistency enough to put it into execution. . . . It is not enough that the Bible be acknowledged as authentic; its authenticity must be something more than acknowledged. It must be felt, and, in act and obedience, submitted to. Let us put them to the test: *Verily I say unto you, says our Saviour, except a man shall be born again, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God.—By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.—Justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.* We need not multiply quotations; but if there be any repugnance to the obvious truths which we have announced to the reader in the language of the Bible, his mind is not yet tutored to the philosophy of the subject. It may be in the way, but the final result is not yet arrived at; and though it admits the principle, that every previous opinion must give way to the supreme authority of an actual communication from God, it wants consistency and hardihood to carry the principle into accomplishment. REV. DR. CHALMERS.

The Admission of Difficulties in Scripture does not invalidate the Truth of its Authority.

WHAT then? Would you have us to admit any thing that contradicts any clear principle or evident conclusion of reason? No; I would have you act agreeably to the clear dictates of reason; it being a clear dictate of reason, that partial and imperfect views may, and often do, occasion an appearance of wrongness and absurdity, which a full comprehensive knowledge of the whole case entirely removes. These appearances of absurdities are but shadows, which are owing to a privation of light, or that the light does not diffuse itself over the whole body of truth, which has to us its dark as well as bright side. We should remember that we know many things but in part; that the most extensive understanding hath its boundaries; and that, when it is arrived at its full height,

the man cannot, however much thought he may take, add one cubit to the stature or size of it: that though we may shorten the line of our knowledge, as we may do that of our lives, by our own default, we cannot extend it beyond the period assigned by God: or if we could, it would be but labor and sorrow; the Deity sometimes being equally gracious in what He has hidden from our eyes, as in what He hath revealed to them.

After all, such an answer as this is sufficient as to most, if not all, of the objections against the main articles of our belief. And such an answer as this, plain sense, without much learning, might suggest: 'Such a moral evidence as there is for Christianity is easy to be understood; and such moral evidence is the only guide of life; that by which our conduct is influenced, and our behaviour determined in all practical cases. Upon this therefore I will rest, as God intended I should do: whereas your objections against the possibility of a general resurrection, the Redemption, the Trinity, and other fundamental doctrines, depend upon metaphysical intricacies, of which we, the bulk of mankind, are no judges at all, whether there be not some flaw in them; and the very ablest men are, it may be, but very incompetent judges. Shall I then be determined to set Revelation aside, upon the account of what I do not understand at all, and men of great reach of thought understand but in part, viz. fine-spun subtleties of disputation? Or shall I adhere to it upon the account of, what are easy to be understood, moral proofs? those very proofs, which are a light unto my paths, and direct my steps in the common pursuits of life? Whatever value you may set on your labored deductions, and a long chain of abstruse reasoning (as some do upon far-fetched and costly rarities), yet such is the goodness of God, that those arguments are generally the best which are the easiest of apprehension, as that food is so which is the easiest of digestion. Away then with your abstracted arguments against religion, by which you, the disputers of this world, can throw a studied obscurity over any great truth, however clear, and give a plausible turn to any falsehood, however palpable. They seem to me to be mere trials of skill and dexterity, and are not, I have heard, quite so good as those of an ancient philoso-

pher* against the possibility of motion, and those of a modern one† against the reality of matter: arguments however that would baffle a very wise man, though they would not convince even a very weak one. Dust they are, raised to obscure more important truths, and to dust they must return; or, after having been troublesome for a while, fall unregarded to the ground. Moral evidences, on the other hand, are suited to my capacity, and much better fitted to ensure a lasting conviction to creatures so formed as men are, than any of those specious kinds of arguing which are set up in opposition to them. They are a lantern to my feet, near at hand, and portable to my memory: whereas metaphysical proofs, be they never so good, are like the fixed stars; which, though they may enlighten beings that move in an orb much superior, afford little or no light to persons in my low situation.'

We are guilty of no immorality in supposing the reason why we cannot conquer an objection to be, not that the objection is unanswerable in itself, but that we want sufficient forces of understanding to conquer it, or perhaps sufficient skill to conduct and manage those forces we have to the best advantage: nay, in so doing we show our modesty: and it were to be wished that some great pretenders to knowledge were masters of the most valuable part of it, that part which teaches them humility; the knowledge of their total ignorance in many things; and their partial ignorance as to all the rest. But we are guilty of an immorality of a very deep dye in refusing to submit to moral certainty; it being confessedly criminal for any man to do that in any case which, if all men were to do in every other case, would interfere with the general happiness, and subvert the very pillar on which society rests.

Since the world began, no one instance can be given that any man was misled by trusting to such proofs as Christianity is confirmed by. For whoever has been misled, it was not by yielding his assent to moral evidence as such, but by yielding it when it was not perfect in its kind, when it wanted some of the ingredients which enter into that of Christianity. But num-

bers have been deceived by trusting to speculative reasonings of a finer texture; and men of superior and exalted sense have fallen into errors, from which common sense has secured the rest of mankind.

The proofs for Revelation have shone the brighter to every rational inquirer the more they have been of late canvassed, examined, and controverted; controversy and opposition having been to them what the wind is to the plumage in Indian crowns. The plumes, however beautiful, never appear to the best advantage while they continue unmoved and undisturbed: the rude disturbance and agitation of the wind sets them in variety of lights, opens and unfolds them, and calls forth into view the whole strength of their lustre, and every beauty which, during the calm, escaped the observation.

I shall conclude with observing that what hath been so often said upon the works of nature holds as true in regard to the Scriptures: viz. a superficial and slender acquaintance with them may tempt a man to infidelity; but an accurate, intimate knowledge of them, and a thorough insight into their contents, brings the mind back to a firm belief, and makes us acknowledge and adore the great Author of them.

REV. JEREMIAH SEED.

On the seeming Contradictions in Scripture.

WHERE Scriptures at first sight seem to contradict one another, we must, by a serious consideration of them, labor to discover their harmony. But if we should not be able to reconcile them, we ought not to pronounce them irreconcilable, but rather attribute a deficiency to our own understandings. There can be no real contradiction but when the different passages mean precisely the same person or thing, and precisely in the same respect and circumstance: no such contradiction is to be found in Scripture. But, where there seems to be one, either (1.) The same terms are used in a different sense in the different texts. Thus Paul directs to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, i. e. filial fear and holy awe; Phil. ii. 12. John says, there is no fear in love;—perfect love casteth out fear; i. e. slavish fear; 1 John iv. 18. The Samaritans *feared the Lord*; i. e. with a slavish dread;—and yet *feared not the Lord*; i. e.

* See Bayle's Dictionary in the article Zeno.

† Berkeley's Dialog. between Hylas and Philonous.

with a childlike, sincere, and holy awe of Him, or a right worshipping of Him; 2 Kings xvii. 32-34. It is appointed for men once to die, i. e. a temporal death; Heb. ix. 27: and yet, if any one keep Christ's sayings, he shall never see death, i. e. eternal death; Jolin viii. 51. A man is justified, i. e. before God, in his person and state, *by faith without the deeds of the law*; Rom. iii. 28; and yet *by works a man is justified*, i. e. before men, and *not by faith only*; James ii. 24. Hatred of others is very sinful; Tit. iii. 3; and yet to hate our nearest relations, i. e. to love them less than we do Christ, is our duty; Luke xiv. 26. Or (2.) The seemingly opposite texts really treat of different subjects. Thus the Spirit of truth guided the apostles into all truth, i. e. in their doctrine; John xvi. 13: and yet Peter erred, and was to be blamed, i. e. in his practice; Gal. ii. 11-18. John Baptist was not Elias, i. e. not the prophet who lived under Ahab; John i. 21; and yet was the Elias foretold by Malachi, i. e. one in the spirit and power of the ancient Elijah; Mat. xi. 11, 12. 14. 18; Mark ix. 11-15; Luke i. 17; Mal. iv. 5. Or (3.) In the seemingly opposite texts the same subject is considered in different parts or respects. Thus believers in Christ their Head, as justified in His righteousness, and in respect of their new nature, and what they aim at and shall quickly obtain, are *all fair without spot*; Song iv. 7; Jer. i. 20; Num. xxiii. 21; 1 John iii. 9, and v. 18; and yet in themselves, and with respect to remaining corruption in them, are all *as an unclean thing—carnal, sold under sin*; Isa. lxiv. 6; Rom. vii. 14. In respect of His divine nature, Christ and His Father are one; John x. 30; 1 John v. 7. In respect of His divine person, He is His Father's equal and fellow; Phil. ii. 6; Zech. xiii. 7. But, in respect of His manhood and mediatory office, His Father is greater than He; John xiv. 28: is His Master; Isa. xlix. 3: His Head; 1 Cor. xi. 3: His God; Eph. i. 3; John xx. 17: His Creator; Jer. xxxi. 22: His Portion; Psal. xvi. 5, 6. In respect of His divine nature, Christ is the *Lord from heaven*; 1 Cor. xv. 47: *God over all*; Rom. ix. 5. In His human nature, He is the *fruit of the earth*; Isa. iv. 2; the child born; Isa. ix. 6. Or (4.) The seemingly opposite texts respect different times and places. Thus, during Christ's humiliation, the

Spirit was not, i. e. was not remarkably poured out; John vii. 39; and yet after Christ's ascension He was poured out; Acts ii. 1 Thess. i. 5. Circumcision, and other Jewish ceremonies, were long necessary duties; Gen. xvii. 9, 10; Rom. iii. 1, 2. But, after their abolition, by the incarnation, obedience, death, and resurrection of Christ, they became sinful rites; Gal. v. 2, and iv. 9-11; Isa. lxvi. 3.

Most of the seeming contradictions in Scripture are found in the historical parts, where their connexion with the great subject or scope of Scripture is less considerable, and where the blunder of a transcriber, or of a printer, in a few letters, might be easily admitted, without really detracting from the honor of the oracles of God.—The apparent contradictions in the history appear owing to the same persons having different names, or the deed being done by different persons; to the one of which it is ascribed in one text, and to another in the other text; or deeds similar being really different. Reckoning of time is sometimes from one period, and sometimes from another; especially when some kings had, for some years, a conjunct reign with their father, and then a separate reign by themselves. Round numbers of hundreds or thousands are put for such as differed but little from them. What is not included in one reckoning is included in another, &c. Thus the sojourning of the Hebrews, from the call of Abraham to leave his native country; Gen. xii. 1; to the deliverance from Egypt, was 430 years; Exod. xii. 40, 41; Gal. iii. 17; but from the birth of Isaac to that deliverance were but 400 years; Gen. xv. 13. Jacob and his descendants, at their going down into Egypt, were in all seventy persons: Gen. xlvii. 26, 27; Deut. x. 22; but excluding Joseph and his two sons, who were in Egypt before, and including eight of Jacob's daughters-in-law, they made seventy-five souls; Acts vii. 14. David by Abishai and his army, slew 18,000 Edomites, who came to assist the Syrians; or 18,000 Syrians, and also 18,000 Edomites; Joab assisted in killing 12,000 of these, or killed 12,000 besides; 2 Sam. viii. 13; 1 Chron. xviii. 12; Psal. lx. title. The Ammonites hired 32,000 Syrians, besides the 1000 from Maachah; 33,000 in all; 2 Sam. ix. 6; 1 Chron. xix. 6, 7.—Of the Syrian army were slain 7000, who fought in 700 cha-

riots, and 40,000 horsemen, and as many footmen, or 40,000 horsemen who dismounted and fought on foot; 2 Sam. x. 18; 1 Chron. xix. 17.—Adino, or Jashobeam, might slay in one battle 800, and in another 300; 2 Sam. xxiii. 8; 1 Chron. xi. 11. When David numbered the people, the men of Judah amounted to 470,000, who, with the 30,000 under their thirty mighties, made 500,000. The men of Israel amounted to 800,000, exclusive of the 288,000 standing troops, which, put together, make almost 1,100,000; 2 Sam. xxiv. 9; 1 Chron. xxi. 5, and xxvii. 1-15.—No more than three years of famine were threatened for David's numbering the people; 1 Chron. xxi. 12: but, had these been added to the three preceding years of famine for Saul's murdering the Gibeonites, they, together with the year of release, would have made seven: 2 Sam. xxiv. 13.—David gave to Araunah, or Ornan, fifty shekels of silver for the thrashing floor, and the oxen then sacrificed; 2 Sam. xxiv. 24: and afterwards bought the whole farm for six hundred shekels of gold, for the temple to be built on; 1 Chron. xxi. 25.—Solomon had 4000 stables, in which were 40,000 stalls, ten in each; or he had 4000 stalls at Jerusalem, and 40,000 in all; 1 Kings iv. 26; 2 Chron. ix. 25.—Hiram got 20 measures of oil for his family; 1 Kings v. 11: and 20,000 baths of oil for his artificers besides; 2 Chron. ii. 10. Solomon's workmen had 3300 subordinate overseers, and over these 300 more, in all 3600; 1 Kings v. 16; 2 Chron. ii. 18.—The temple was founded in the 480th year of the deliverance from Egypt; 1 Kings vi. 1: therefore the 450 years mentioned Acts xiii. 20 must either mark the time from the birth of Isaac to the settlement in Canaan, or the years of oppression mentioned in the book of Judges, must be included in the rests; or some of the latter judges must have been contemporary.—Each of the brazen pillars, at the entrance of the tabernacle, was almost eighteen cubits, which, being joined together, made thirty-five cubits for both; 1 Kings vii. 15; 2 Kings xxv. 17; Jer. lii. 21; 2 Chron. ii. 15.—The brazen sea had ordinarily no more than two thousand baths of water in it; 1 Kings vii. 26: but, if filled to the brim, it could have held 3000; 2 Chron. iv. 5.—Solomon's fleet brought him from Ophir four hundred and fifty talents in all, of which

420 were clear gain, or they brought him 420 talents at one voyage, and 450 in another; 1 Kings ix. 28; 2 Chron. viii. 18. At least in Solomon's time, there was nothing in the ark but the two tables of the law; 1 Kings viii. 9; 2 Chron. v. 10: but the pot of manna and Aaron's budding rod were once in it, or rather placed in the fore side of it; Heb. ix. 4.—King Ahaziah began his reign in the twenty-second year of his age; 2 Kings viii. 26; and in the forty-second year of the royalty of his mother's family, to which he was so like in his conduct; 2 Chron. xxii. 2.—The vessels of gold and silver were not made till after the temple itself was repaired; 2 Kings xii. 10. 14: but were afterwards formed of what metal remained; 2 Chron. xxiv. 11. 14.—Jehoiachin's release was appointed on the 25th day of the month; Jer. lii. 31: but not executed till the 27th; 2 Kings xxv. 27.—Of the two lists of the returning captives, in Ezra ii. and Neh. vii., the one may mark the numbers enrolled in order to return, and the other the numbers which actually returned.—To reconcile the apparent inconsistencies in the four gospels, nothing more is necessary but to place the passages in their proper order.

REV. J. BROWN.

An Objection to the Method in which Divine Truths are inculcated in Scripture answered.

SOME men find fault with the Scriptures because divine truths are not thrown together in regular order, as in our catechisms. But God puts not such value on men's accurate methods as they imagine them to deserve. Nor are they so subservient to His ends in the revelation of Himself as they are apt to fancy. Yet often when they think that they have brought truths into the strictest propriety of expression and order, they lose both their power and their glory. Hence is the world filled with so many lifeless, sapless, graceless, artificial declarations of divine truth, in the schoolmen and others. We may sooner squeeze water out of a pumice stone, than one drop of spiritual nourishment out of them. But how many millions of souls have received divine benefit and consolation exactly suited to their condition by those occasional occurrences of truth which they met with in the Scriptures, and which

they would never have obtained by those wise artificial arrangements which some men would fancy. Truths have their efficacy and power in our minds, not only from themselves, but from their place and position in the Scriptures. They are placed in such respects towards us, and in such connexion one with another, as their influence upon our minds greatly depends on. Artificial methodising of spiritual truths may make men ready in notions, cunning and subtle in disputations: but it is the Scripture itself in its own present arrangement which is able to make us wise unto salvation. DR. J. OWEN.

It is by no means a matter of chance, but a singular providence of God, that most of the sublime mysteries of the kingdom of heaven were propounded to us in common language, destitute of ornament; lest, had they been artfully composed on rhetorical precepts, and enriched with eloquence, their strength and efficacy might have been attributed to the false lustre and vain arrangement of words. Since, therefore, this simplicity, coarse and unpolished as it may be, does not fail to inspire us with greater respect, and more profound veneration for holy Writ, than could be produced by the polished language of orators; can we do otherwise than conclude, that the Scriptures contain a truth so clear and striking, as to maintain itself without standing in need of the artifices of eloquence to procure admiration? CALVIN.

The same Spirit, that speaks by the mouths of the prophets, must necessarily enter into our souls, to convince us that those holy men have faithfully declared what God had commanded them, Is. lix. 21. Some pious souls, hearing the ungodly murmur with impunity against the Scriptures, have grieved that they had not at hand some convincing argument to silence them immediately. But these good people are mistaken, not considering that the Holy Ghost is called a seal and an earnest to confirm the faith of believers; for until he enlighten them inwardly, their own spirit can float in uncertainty only. Let us therefore lay it down as a certain, invariable rule, that none can rest a firm and solid confidence on the Scriptures, but such as are disciples of the Holy Ghost, that is to say, such as are inwardly enlightened by his divine illumination. CALVIN.

ANTH.

VOL. I.

The internal Evidence of Scripture not confined to Men of Learning.

BUT the gospel was not given only for learned men. There are at least nineteen in twenty, if not ninety-nine in a hundred, of those for whom the Scriptures were written, that are not capable of any certain or effectual conviction of the divine authority of the Scriptures, by such arguments as learned men make use of. If men who have been brought up in heathenism must wait for a clear and certain conviction of the truth of Christianity until they have learning and acquaintance with the histories of politer nations, enough to see clearly the force of such kind of arguments, it will make the evidence of the gospel to them immensely cumbersome, and will render the propagation of the gospel among them infinitely difficult. Miserable is the condition of the Houssatannuck Indians, and others, who have lately manifested a desire to be instructed in Christianity, if they can come at no evidence of the truth of Christianity sufficient to induce them to sell all for Christ, in any other way but this.

It is unreasonable to suppose that God has provided for his people no more than probable evidences of the truth of the gospel. He has with great care abundantly provided, and given them the most convincing, assuring, satisfying, and manifold evidence of his faithfulness in the covenant of grace; and as David says, *made a covenant ordered in all things and sure*. Therefore it is rational to suppose, that at the same time, he would not fail of ordering the matter so, that there should not be wanting, as great, and clear evidence, that this is his covenant, and that these promises are his promises; or, which is the same thing, that the Christian religion is true, and that the gospel is his word. Otherwise in vain are those great assurances he has given of his faithfulness in his covenant, by confirming it with his oath, and so variously establishing it by seals and pledges. For the evidence that it is his covenant, is properly the foundation on which all the force and effect of those other assurances do stand. We may therefore undoubtedly suppose and conclude, that there is some sort of evidence which God has given, that this covenant, and these promises are his, beyond all mere probability; that there

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are some grounds of assurance of it held forth, which, if we are not blind to them, tend to give a higher persuasion than any arguing from history, human tradition, &c. which the illiterate and unacquainted with history are capable of; yea, that which is good ground of the highest and most perfect assurance, that mankind have in any case whatsoever, agreeable to those high expressions which the apostle uses, Heb. x. 22, *Let us draw near in full assurance of faith.* And Col. ii. 2, *That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.* It is reasonable to suppose, that God would give the greatest evidence of those things which are greatest, and the truth of which is of greatest importance to us: and that we therefore, if we are wise, and act rationally, shall have the greatest desire of having full, undoubting, and perfect assurance of. But it is certain, that such an assurance is not to be attained by the greater part of them who live under the gospel, by arguments fetched from ancient traditions, histories, and monuments.

And if we come to fact and experience, there is not the least reason to suppose that one in a hundred of those who have been sincere Christians, and have had a heart to sell all for Christ, have come by their conviction of the truth of the gospel this way. If we read over the histories of the many thousands that died martyrs for Christ, since the beginning of the Reformation, and have cheerfully undergone extreme tortures in a confidence of the truth of the gospel, and consider their circumstances and advantages; how few of them were there, that we can reasonably suppose, ever came by their assured persuasion this way; or indeed for whom it was possible, reasonably to receive so full and strong an assurance, from such arguments! Many of them were weak women and children, and the greater part of them illiterate persons, many of whom had been brought up in popish ignorance and darkness, and were but newly come out of it, and lived and died in times wherein those arguments for the truth of Christianity, from antiquity and history, had been but very imperfectly handled. And indeed it is but very lately that these arguments have been set in a clear and convincing

light, even by learned men themselves: and since it has been done, there never were fewer thorough believers among those who have been educated in the true religion; infidelity never prevailed so much, in any age, as in this, wherein these arguments are handled to the greatest advantage. . . . But yet it must be noted, that among those who have a spiritual sight of the divine glory of the gospel, there is a great variety of degrees of strength of faith, as there is a vast variety of the degrees of clearness of views of this glory; but there is no true and saving faith, or spiritual conviction of the judgment of the truth of the gospel, that has nothing in it of this manifestation of its internal evidence, in some degree. The gospel of the blessed God does not go abroad begging for its evidence, so much as some think; it has its highest and most proper evidence in itself. Yet great use may be made of external arguments; they are not to be neglected but highly prized and valued; for they may be greatly serviceable to awaken unbelievers, and bring them to serious consideration, and to confirm the faith of true saints: yea, they may be in some respects subservient to the begetting of a saving faith in men.

PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

The Scriptures are the Property of the Poor and Unlearned, as well as of the Great and Learned.

CHRIST saith (Luke xi.), *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* And again (Mat. xi.), *Come unto me all ye that are weary and laden, and I will ease you.* The prophet saith (Joel ii.), *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.* These be the words of God; what darkness is in them? what eye so simple, but he may see them?

The ways of the Lord are straight, and his words plain even unto the simple. Chrysostom saith, 'All things are clear and plain in the holy Scriptures. Whatsoever things there are necessary for us are also manifest.' Some things are covered, as men cover precious stones and precious garments; they are covered, and yet we see them; we see them, and yet they are covered; yet all things that are necessary are plain and open.

Clemens saith, 'The word of God is hid from no man; it is a light common

unto all men; there is no darkness in God's word.' Mark, it is a common light, and shineth to all men; it is as bright and beautiful as the sun; there is no dungeon or darkness in it. So saith Irenæus: 'The Scriptures are plain, and without doubtfulness, and may be heard indifferently of all men.' All men may hear them, even all sorts of men without exception.

Where be they then which say it is not lawful for the people to have the word of God, and that the Scriptures are not meet for their reading? They are bread; they are drink; they nourish unto everlasting life. Great cruelty it is to starve God's people to death. Are they unfit to have the Scriptures, because they be poor? Christ saith (Matt. xi.) *The poor receive the glad tidings of the gospel.* And (Matt. v.), *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:* they want riches, and worldly glory, but God giveth his fear and grace to them, as well as to the rich.

Are they unfit to read the Scriptures, because they are not bred up in other learning? St. Paul saith (1 Cor. ii.), *I esteemed not to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* The prophet David saith (Psal. xciv.), *Blessed is the man, O Lord, whom thou teachest in thy law.* And Christ saith (Matt. xi.), *Thou hast hid these things from the wise, and men of understanding, and hast opened them unto babes.* The apostles were sent into all the world to preach the gospel unto every creature, to learned and unlearned, to poor and rich. There is no man too poor, none too rich, none too young, none too old. Whosoever hath ears to hear, he hath learning enough to be a hearer.

As for the wisest and learned men in matters of this world, they have not always proved the readiest and most willing to set forth the glory of God: they have not been the meekest scholars for this school. Who were they that resisted Moses and Aaron, the servants of God? Not the people, but the wisest and best learned in Egypt. Who were they that stood against Elias? Not the people, but the learned and wise men, and the prophets and priests of Baal. Who were they that stoned and killed the prophets? Not the people, but the chiefest and wisest in Israel. Who were they that resisted Christ and

his gospel, and sought to deface the glory of God? Not the people, but the scribes, and pharisees, and high-priests, and all the troop of their clergy. They called Christ a deceiver, and Beelzebub, a companion of publicans and harlots; they lay in wait every where to entrap him; they sued him to death.

St. Paul saith for conclusion in this manner (1 Cor. i.), *It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will cast away the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made the wisdom of this world foolishness? For seeing the world by wisdom knew not God, in the wisdom of God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believed.—Brethren, you see your calling, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty things; and vile things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen.*

Mark, saith he, how mercifully God hath dealt with you. Few of the learned sort, few such as are counted wise, embrace the gospel with you, or join with you in faith, or keep you company. God hath let them be deceived in their wisdom; they take themselves to be wise, and yet are become fools, and contrary to worldly judgment. God hath made you, which were weak and simple, and of no reputation, wise and righteous, and sanctified and redeemed in Christ Jesus. And Christ saith (Matt. xviii.), *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Therefore the godly father Chrysostom calleth upon the people to read and hear the Scriptures. 'Hear me, ye men of the world; get ye the Bible, that most wholesome remedy for the soul; if ye will nothing else, yet at the least get the New Testament, St. Paul's Epistles, the Gospels, and the Acts, that they may be your continual and earnest teachers.' And again: 'Hearken not hereto, only here in the church, but also at home; let the husband with the wife, let the father with the child, talk together of these matters, and both to and fro, let them both inquire, and

give their judgments; and would God they would begin this good custom!

In like sort saith Origen: 'Would God we would all do accordingly as it is written, search the Scriptures! It were a token that we do love Christ. Then would the Father love us, and Christ would love us, and show himself unto us; and he and his Father would come unto us, and dwell in us.'

Chrysostom saith: 'This is the cause of all ill, that the Scriptures are not known. To know nothing of God's laws (saith he in another place) is the loss of salvation; ignorance hath brought in heresies and vicious life; ignorance hath turned all things upside down.'

St. Jerome, expounding those words of the apostle, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you plenteously*, saith, 'Here we are taught, that the lay people ought to have the word of God, not only sufficiently, but also with abundance, and to teach and counsel one another.'

And now to conclude what the learned fathers and ancient doctors have said in these matters. Theodoretus saith, 'Ye may commonly see, that our doctrine is known not only of them that are the doctors of the church, and the masters of the people, but also even of the tailors, and smiths, and weavers, and of all artificers; yea, and farther also of women, and that not only of them that be learned, but also of labouring women, and sewsters, and servants, and handmaids; neither only the citizens, but also the country folks do very well understand the same. Ye may find, yea, even the very ditchers, and delvers, and cow-herds, and gardeners, disputing of the Holy Trinity, and of the creation of all things.'

Thus we see there was a time, before ignorance crept into the church, and got the upper hand, when the word of God was not counted hard, and dark, and doubtful; when children, and women, and servants, and men of the country, had the knowledge of God, and were able to reason of the works of God. Then went it well with them; they could not easily be deceived, because they had that word which bewrayeth the thief; they carried with them like good exchangers the weights and touchstone, and were able to try coins whether they were true or false. Such were the people, such was the state of God's church in those days.

Gold, and silver, and lands, and possessions, are the portions but of few; they are not common to all alike. The wise man saith (Prov. xix.), *House and riches come by inheritance of the fathers*. But the word of God, the law and prophets, the apostles, the evangelists, the gift of the Spirit, and the knowledge of God, are given unto all men; they are made common for all men.

If the word were ordained but for a few, then Christ was given unto the world but for a few; the heaven was made but for a few; the mercy and love of God was but for a few. But the mercy of God is over all, and upon all, and for all. All have right to hear the word of God; all have need to know the word of God. *All have sinned, and are deprived of the glory of God.* (Rom. iii.)

Therefore Christ calleth all (Matt. xi.): *Come unto me all ye that be weary and laden*. Young men and old men, men and women, rich and poor, come to me. *God is no acceptor of persons.* (Acts x.) *It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven* (saith Christ Matt. xviii.) *that one of these little ones should perish. Who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.* (1 Tim. ii.) *God will look to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his words.* (Isa. lxvi.) God will regard such a one, and make him a fit vessel to receive his truth. Upon him that is such a one shall the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of God rest.

Not only upon the rich, the wise, and the learned, but upon him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his word; upon him that humbleth himself under the mighty hand of God; he is the temple and the tabernacle of the Holy Ghost. He that is humble in heart shall be saved: God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the lowly.

Therefore Christ said (Matt. xi.), *I give thee thanks, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and men of understanding, and hast opened them unto babes*, even to such as have no learning, which rejoice in nothing but in thee. The wise and learned of the world cannot hear them, cannot see them; but they to whom it pleased thee to give understanding. It

is thy mercy. Flesh and blood cannot reach the knowledge of thy will. The Spirit of the Father hath revealed it.

Christ saith (John x.), *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; they will not follow a stranger.* My people are simple as sheep; they are rude, and know not what they do; yet they know my voice, and follow me; they know their Shepherd from a thief; they follow not the call and voice of a stranger. So we see that God chaseth no man away from hearing his word; he loatheth not the poor, because of his poverty; he refuseth him not, for he is the God of the poor; they be his creatures.

St. Augustine saith, 'Almighty God, in the Scriptures, speaketh as a familiar friend, without dissimulation, unto the hearts both of the learned and of the unlearned.' He abaseth himself, and speaketh to their capacity; for his will is, that all should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved.

When Christ himself came first into the world to plant his church, he vouchsafed the poor and simple the knowledge of his truth, and showed it first unto them. The first that had tidings of his birth were not scribes and pharisees, but a company of poor shepherds. The first that received his gospel, and taught it in the world, were not doctors or learned men, but fishers, and toll-gatherers, and of base condition. The first that met him with triumph at Jerusalem, and sang Hosanna, were not bishops and priests, but babes and infants. They that followed him most and believed, were not the greatest men of power and policy, but such as the pharisees termed a cursed people, which knew not the law. The first that told the apostles the resurrection of Christ, were not the sagest and wisest men, but two or three silly women.

The first that were converted to the faith after his resurrection, were not any of the great, learned, or otherwise esteemed and known among the people, but about three thousand poor, silly, simple men; so base, and so out of knowledge, that not one of their names could ever be known.

Why should any man resist the wisdom of God, and deny the people the bread whereon they should feed, the light by which they may safely walk, the hearing and reading of the word, by which they

may be turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God? They have cruel hearts, and are enemies to the glory of God, and to the salvation of his people, which in such sort deny them the knowledge of the Scriptures. BP. JEWELL.

The Word of God provides for every want of Man.

ACCORDING unto the several estates, and unto the secret demands of each member's condition; so doth the care of Christ severally show itself towards the same in his word: there is provision for any want, medicine for any disease, comforts for any distress, promises for any faith, answers to any doubt, directions in any difficulty, weapons against any temptation, preservatives against any sin, restoratives against lapse, garments to cover my nakedness, meat to satisfy my hunger, physic to cure my diseases, armour to protect my person, a treasure to provide for my posterity. If I am rich, I have there the wisdom of God to instruct me; and if I am poor, I have there the obligations of God to enrich me. If I am honorable, I have there the sight of my sins to make me vile; and rules of moderation to make me humble: if I am of low degree, I have there the communion and consanguinity of Christ, the participation of the divine nature, the adoption of God the Father to make me noble. If I am learned, I have there a law of charity to order it unto edification; and if I am unlearned, I have there a Spirit which searcheth the deep things of God, which can give wisdom unto the simple, which can reveal secrets unto babes, which can command light to shine out of darkness, which can give the light of the knowledge of the glory, fullness, and love of God in the face of Jesus Christ, which can make me, though ignorant of all other things, to learn Christ, in whom there is more wisdom, more various and admirable curiosity, more filling and plentiful satisfaction, more proportion to the boundless desires of a soul once rectified, more fruit and salvation (which should be the end of every Christian man's learning) than in all other knowledge which either past or present ages can afford. In one word, every where, and in all things, I am there taught how to want, and how to abound, and how to do all things through Christ that strengthens me. A Christian can be set in no estate,

wherein the abundant care of Christ over him is not in the gospel wonderfully magnified.
 BP. REYNOLDS.

Men never get beyond the New Testament.

FOR centuries past the world has been in a state of gradual improvement, which is still increasing with accelerated rapidity. Ancient ages, even the most renowned, we have far outstripped in every useful science; and by means of modern discoveries, their most famous books are found extremely deficient. Within the limits of the eighteenth century this has been remarkably the case. How many treatises regarded as master-pieces at the beginning were looked upon as antiquated before the end. When we consider the intense application of thousands of enlightened and highly cultivated minds, all in quest of new discoveries, and all endeavouring to improve on what was written before, we shall not wonder at this advancement.

It naturally occurs to inquire, how it is in reference to religion, and whether the New Testament stands its ground. A full proportion of learned men have applied themselves to the study of the principles of religion and morals, and to those sciences connected with them, which have respect to moral obligation and privilege. But have any of them outstripped the New Testament, as the moderns have outstripped the ancient philosophers? Have they found out any part of the character of God which it does not display, any duty which it does not inculcate? No: with all their researches, and with all the additional knowledge of eighteen centuries, they have not moved a step before the men of Galilee. Nay, they may perceive the New Testament is still before them.

In these latter times many conceive that considerable progress has been made in the knowledge of that part of morals which respects individual and domestic, but especially national relations. After having viewed these pretensions which profess to have their basis fixed on the principles of eternal justice, let us turn to the New Testament, and examine if these men have outstripped it. But we find there all these noble sentiments, the force and extent of which were not perceived before, that are applicable to what is good

in them, and to those things which are really improvements, and countenancing and enjoining them by the spirit of the gospel. Is it not astonishing that whenever any useful discovery in moral science has been made, it is found that the New Testament contains it, though before unnoticed? This has been the case from century to century: it is so still: and, beyond a doubt, there are still many divine principles of morals in the New Testament, which the progress in knowledge of this and future ages will lead men to discover.

But whence comes this peculiar quality in the New Testament? The vast comprehensive knowledge of the Spirit of God who indited it can alone be assigned as the rational and satisfactory cause. If Christianity had been the invention of men, it would have shared the fate of all other systems of the like origin. The improvements of modern times would have left it far behind.

This has been the case with all the Pagan religions. A person in the present age who had written on theological subjects, though of moderate abilities, instead of considering it as a compliment, would think himself grossly insulted if you were to say to him, 'I admire your book: your ideas of God and religion are fully on a level with the Grecian mythology, the Indian Shasters, and the system of Confucius.' Nor would he think that justice was done him, unless it was granted that he had surpassed the Koran of Mahomet in his representations of truth and duty. But the plain illiterate fishermen, publicans, and tent-makers of Judea and Galilee, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, are still masters in religion and morals. No man in all that time has stepped one foot before them. Let those who will not allow that they were taught of God, assign a satisfactory reason for their pre-eminence.
 DR. BOGUE.

Exhortation to the reading of the Scriptures.

WHO can take the light from us in this miserable vale of blindness, and mean not to have us stumble in the paths of perdition, to the ruin of our souls? Who will envy us this bread of life, prepared and set on the table for our eternal sustenance, and mean not to famish us, or instead thereof, with their corrupt traditions and

doctrines of man, to infect us? *All the whole Scriptures*, saith the holy Apostle St. Paul, inspired from God above, *is profitable to teach, to reprove, to reform, to instruct in righteousness, that the man of God may be sound and perfect, instructed in every good work.*

Search therefore, good reader (on God's name), as Christ biddeth thee, the holy Scripture, wherein thou mayest find thy salvation. Let not the volume of this book (by God's own warrant) depart from thee, but occupy thyself therein in the whole journey of this thy worldly pilgrimage, to understand thy way how to walk rightly before him all the days of thy life. Remember that the prophet David pronounceth him the blessed man, which will muse in the law of God both day and night. Remember that he calleth him blessed, which walketh in the way of the Lord, which will search diligently his testimonies, and will in his whole heart seek the same.

Let not the covert suspicious insinuations of the adversaries drive thee from the search of the holy Scriptures, either for the obscurity which they say is in them, or for the inscrutable hidden mysteries they talk to be comprised in them, or for the strangeness and homeliness of the phrases they would charge God's book with. Christ exhorteth thee therefore the rather for the difficulty of the same to search them diligently. St. Paul willeth thee to have thy senses exercised in them, and not to be a child in thy senses, but in malice.

Though many things may be difficult to thee to understand, impute it rather to thy dull hearing and reading, than to think that the Scriptures be insuperable to them which with diligeht searching labour to discern the evil from the good. Only search with an humble spirit, ask in continual prayer, seek with purity of life, knock with perpetual perseverance, and cry to that good Spirit of Christ the Comforter; and surely to every such asker it will be given, such searchers must needs find, to them it will be opened.

Christ himself will open the sense of the Scriptures, not to the proud, or to the wise of the world, but to the lowly and contrite in heart; for he hath the key of David, who openeth, and no man shutteth; who shutteth, and no man openeth. For as this Spirit is a benign and liberal Spirit, and will be easily found of them which will

early in carefulness rise to seek him, and as he promiseth he will be the Comforter from above to teach us, and to lead us into all the ways of truth, if that in humility we bow unto him, denying our own natural senses, our carnal wits and reasons; so he is the Spirit of purity and cleanness, and will recede from him whose conscience is subject to filthiness of life. Into such a soul this heavenly wisdom will not enter; for all perverse cogitations will separate us from God. And then how busily soever we search this holy table of the Scripture, yet will it then be a table to such to their own snare, a trap, a stumbling-block, and a recompense to themselves. . . .

And here, good reader, great cause we have to extol the wonderous wisdom of God, and with great thanks to praise his providence, considering how he hath preserved and renewed from age to age, by special miracle, the incomparable treasure of his church. 'For first he did inspire Moses,' as John Chrysostom doth testify, 'to write the stony tables, and kept him in the mountains forty days, to give him his law. After him he sent the prophets; but they suffered many thousand adversities; for battles did follow, all were slain, all were destroyed, books were burnt up. He then inspired another man to repair these miraculous Scriptures; Esdras, I mean, who of their leavings set them again together. After that, he provided that the seventy interpreters should take them in hand. At the last came Christ himself. The apostles did receive them, and spread them throughout all nations. Christ wrought his miracles and wonders; and what followed? After these great volumes, the apostles also did write, as St. Paul doth say, *These be written to the instruction of us, that be come into the end of the world.* And Christ doth say, *Ye therefore do err, because ye know not the Scripture, nor the power of God.* And Paul did say, *Let the word of Christ be plentiful among you.* And again saith David, *Oh! how sweet be thy words to my throat* (he saith not, to my hearing, but, to my throat), *above the honey or the honeycomb to my mouth!* Yea, Moses saith, *Thou shalt meditate in them evermore; when thou risest, and when thou sittest down, when thou goest to sleep, continue in them*, he saith, and a thousand places more. And yet after so many testimonies thus spoken, there be some persons that do not yet so

much as know what the Scriptures be ; whereupon nothing is in good state amongst us, nothing worthily is done amongst us. In this which pertains to this life, we make very great haste, but of spiritual goods we have no regard.' Thus far John Chrysostom.

It must needs signify some great thing to our understanding, that Almighty God hath had such care to prescribe these books thus unto us ; I say not prescribe them only, but to maintain them, and defend them against the malignity of the devil and his ministers, who always went about to destroy them. And yet would these never be so destroyed, but that he would have them continue whole and perfect unto this day, to our singular comfort and instruction, where other books of mortal wise men have perished in great numbers. . .

Whereupon, seeing Almighty God by his divine providence hath preserved these books of the Scriptures safe and sound, and that in their native languages they were first written in, the great ignorance that reigned in these tongues, and, contrary to all other casualties, chanced upon all other books, in maugre of all worldly wits, who would so fain have had them destroyed, and yet he by his mighty hand would have them extant as witnesses and interpreters of his will toward mankind ; we may soon see cause most reverently to embrace these divine testimonies of his will, to study them, and to search them, to instruct our blind nature, so sore corrupted and fallen from the knowledge in which first we were created ; yet having occasion given somewhat to recover our fall, and to return again to that divine nature wherein we were once made, and at the last to be inheritors in the celestial habitation with God Almighty, after the end of our mortality here, brought to his dust again.

These books, I say, being of such estimation and authority, so much revered of them who had any mean taste of them, could never be put out of the way neither by the spite of any tyrant, as that tyrant Maximian destroyed all the Holy Scriptures, wheresoever they could be found, and burnt them in the midst of the market ; neither the hatred of any Porphyrian philosopher or rhetorician, neither by the envy of the Romanists, and of such hypocrites who from time to time did ever bark against them, some of them not in open sort of condemnation, but more cunningly

under subtle pretences ; for that, as they were so hard to understand, and especially for that they affirm it to be a perilous matter to translate the text of the Holy Scripture, and therefore it cannot be well translated.

ABP. PARKER.

Christ to be chiefly sought for in Scripture.

SEARCH the Scriptures : if you think to have eternal life, search them : if you would know Christ, whom to know is eternal life, then again search them, for these are they that testify of him. Searching imports diligence, much diligence ; it is a serious work ; it is not a common seeking of an easy and common thing, but it is a search and scrutiny for some hidden thing, for some special thing. . . There is some hidden secret that you must search for, that is inclosed within the covering of words and sentences ; there is a mystery of wisdom that you must apply your hearts to search out (Eccl. vii. 5). Jesus Christ is the treasure that is hid in this field,—a precious treasure of eternal life ! Now then, search into the fields of the Scriptures (Prov. ii. 4), for him as for hid treasure. It is not only truth you must seek and buy, and not sell it, but it is life you must search for. Here is an object that may not only take up your understandings, but satisfy your hearts. Think not you have found all when you have found the truth there, and learned it. No, except you have found life there, you have found nothing, you have missed the treasure. If you would profit by the Scriptures, you must bring both your understandings and your affections to them, and depart not till they both return full : if you bring your understanding to seek the truth, you may find truth, but not truly. You may find it, but you are not found of it. You may lead truth captive, and inclose it in a prison of your mind, and encompass it about with a guard of corrupt affections, that it shall have no issue, no outgoing to the rest of your souls and ways, and no influence on them ; you may know the truth, but you are not known of it, and brought in captivity to the obedience of it. The treasure that is hid in the Scriptures is Jesus Christ, whose entire and perfect name is, *Way, Truth, and Life*. He is a living truth and true life : therefore Christ is the adequate object of the soul, commensurable to all its faculties. He has truth in him to sa-

tisfy the mind, and has life and goodness in him to satiate the heart: therefore if thou wouldst find Jesus Christ, bring thy whole soul to seek him, as Paul expresseth it. He is true and faithful, and worthy of all acceptation; then bring thy judgment to find the light of truth, and thy affections to embrace the life of goodness that is in him.

Now, as much as ye find of him, so much have ye profited in the Scriptures. If you find commands there which you cannot obey, search again, and you may find strength under that command; dig a little deeper, and you shall find Jesus the end of an impossible command: and when you have found him, you have found life and strength to obey, and you have found a propitiation and sacrifice for transgressing and not obeying. If you find curses in it, search again, and you shall find Jesus Christ, under that, made a curse for us; you shall find him, in the end of the curse, for righteousness to every one that believes.

REV. H. BINNING.

What more glorious truth can possibly remain concealed in the Scriptures, now that the seals have been broken, and the stone is rolled from the door of the sepulchre, and this transcendent mystery has gone forth,—Christ the Son of God became a man, God is Three in One, Christ hath suffered for us, and will reign for us for ever and ever? Verily these things are universally known and spread abroad. But take Christ from the Scriptures, and what will you find in them more?

LUTHER.*

Scripture must be applied by the Holy Spirit.

ALL the books and writings which we converse with, they can but represent spiritual objects to our understandings; which yet we can never see in their own true figure, colour, and proportion, until we have a divine light within, to irradiate and shine upon them. . . . Though there be never such excellent truths concerning Christ and his Gospel set down in words and letters; yet they will be but unknown characters to us, until we have a living Spirit within us that can decipher them, until the same Spirit, by secret whispers in our hearts, do comment upon them, which did at first indite them.

* Ex Tom. iii. Lat. 168. b.

There be many that understand the Greek and Hebrew of the Scripture, the original languages in which the text was written, that never understood the language of the Spirit.

There is a flesh and a spirit, a body and a soul, in all the writings of the Scriptures. It is but the flesh and body of divine truths that is printed upon paper;—which many moths of books and libraries do only feed upon;—which many walking skeletons of knowledge, that bury and entomb truths in the living sepulchres of their souls, do only converse with; such as never did any thing else but pick at the mere bark and rind of truths, and crack the shells of them. But there is a soul and spirit of divine truths that could never yet be congealed into ink, that could never be blotted upon paper, which by a secret traduction and conveyance passeth from one soul unto another, being able to dwell or lodge no where but in a spiritual being, in a living thing, because itself is nothing but life and spirit. Neither can it, where indeed it is, express itself sufficiently in words and sounds, but it will best declare and speak itself in actions; as the old manner of writing among the Egyptians was, not by words, but things. The life of divine truths is better expressed in actions than in words, because actions are more living things than words: words are nothing but dead resemblances and pictures of those truths which live and breathe in actions: and the kingdom of God, as the Apostle speaketh, consisteth not in word, but in life and power. . .

Let us not, I beseech you, judge of our knowing Christ by our ungrounded persuasions that Christ from all eternity hath loved us, and given himself particularly for us, without the conformity of our lives to Christ's commandments, without the real partaking of the image of Christ in our hearts. The great mystery of the Gospel doth not lie only in Christ without us, though we must know also what he hath done for us; but the very pith and kernel of it consists in Christ inwardly formed in our hearts.

Nothing is truly ours but what lives in our spirits. Salvation itself cannot save us as long as it is only without us; no more than health can cure us, and make us sound, when it is not within us, but somewhere at a distance from us; no more than arts and sciences, whilst they lie only

in books and papers without us, can make us learned. The Gospel, though it be a sovereign and medicinal thing in itself, yet the mere knowing and believing of the history of it will do us no good: we can receive no virtue from it till it be inwardly digested and concocted into our souls; till it be made ours, and become a living thing in our hearts. The Gospel, if it be only without us, cannot save us; no more than that physician's bill could cure the ignorant patient of his disease, who, when it was commended to him, took the paper only, and put it up in his pocket, but never drank the potion that was prescribed in it.

All that Christ did for us in the flesh, when he was here upon earth, from his lying in a manger when he was born in Bethlehem, to his bleeding upon the cross on Golgotha, it will not save us from our sins, unless Christ by his Spirit dwell in us. It will not avail us to believe that he was born of a Virgin, unless the power of the Most High overshadow our hearts, and beget him there likewise. It will not profit us to believe that he died upon the cross for us, unless we be baptised into his death by the mortification of all our lusts; unless the old man of sin be crucified in our hearts. Christ indeed hath made an expiation for our sins upon his cross, and the blood of Christ is the only sovereign balsam to free us from the guilt of them: but yet, besides the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon us, we must be made partakers also of his Spirit. Christ came into the world, as well to redeem us from the power and bondage of our sins, as to free us from the guilt of them. *You know*, saith St. John, *that he was manifested to take away our sins: whosoever therefore abideth in him, sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen nor known him.* Lo, the end of Christ's coming into the world! lo, a design worthy of God manifested in the flesh! CUDWORTH.

For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. That you have yielded obedience unto the word, and that my ministry hath been effectual among you, it cometh not of any power in yourselves or in me, it is the work of God. He hath blessed my ministry; he hath blessed your hearts. It is the gift of God, lest any man should boast thereof. Hereof he speaketh to the

Corinthians: *Who is Paul then, and who is Apollos, but the ministers by whom ye believed, and as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase,* 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6. *It is he which hath the key of David, which openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.* Without him we can do nothing; he guideth us and all our counsels, and leadeth us into all truth. *No man can come unto me* (saith Christ, John vi.) *except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.* And by the prophet Ezekiel God saith, *I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will put my spirit within you, and will cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them,* Ezekiel xxxvi. And by the prophet Jeremiah: *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.* Therefore David maketh his prayer, *Teach me, O Lord; give me understanding, and I will keep thy laws,* Psa. cxix.

The words of the preacher enter in at the ear: the Spirit of God conveyeth them into the heart. Augustine saith, 'The Gospel is declared: some there are which believe; some there are which believe not: they which believe, hear it inwardly by the Father, and so learn it; they which believe not, hear it only with their outward sense, and not with inward feeling, and therefore learn it not.' As much as to say, to them it is given to believe; to the other it is not given. In the Acts of the Apostles (xvi.), *Lydia, a woman of the city of the Thyatireans, heard the preaching of the Apostle Paul; (but it is said) whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that Paul spake.* The people which said unto Peter, and the other Apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* did hear all the words of Peter; but they had another teacher, that gave force unto the word, and made it fruitful in them, and therefore it is said, *They were pricked in their hearts.*

This also appeared in the disciples which walked towards Emmaus (Luke xxiv.); they heard Christ open the Scriptures unto them; they reasoned with him; yet until their eyes were opened, they knew him not. His word crept into their ears, but it was the Spirit of God which wrought within them, which inflamed

their hearts, and made them to know him. Thus God blesseth his word, and maketh it yield fruit in such measure as his wisdom hath appointed. His blessing appeareth greater when many are converted, yet is his word all one, and the power thereof no whit shorter when it is utterly refused, or received but of few. *Surely* (saith God), *as the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it fruitful, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to him that eateth; so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I will, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.* (Isaiah lv.) It is the word of the living God which is blessed for ever; and blessed is that heart which can receive it, which God instructeth, and giveth knowledge of his word; which doth so learn it that he is assured of the truth thereof, and nothing doubteth but it is indeed the word of life; which saith thereof, this is the way, in which if I walk I shall certainly go forward to the city of my God: this is the truth; if I hearken unto it, I shall never be deceived. Whosoever findeth himself endued with this grace, he doth as plainly and evidently judge of the words of God, and try out the truth thereof from the devices and doctrines of men, as a man of clear eyesight is able to judge of colours, and to know one colour from another. Yea, in this is the knowledge of that more certain, because colours do fade and alter, and many times one colour thereby waxeth like another: but the truth of God doth never alter; it continueth one through all ages; it is the word of everlasting life: heaven and earth shall perish, but one tittle thereof shall not be lost: the truth of God shall be established for ever; the humble shall hear it, and be glad.

BP. JEWELL.

Until God himself touch our hearts by his Spirit, it is impossible that we should believe his word. For such is the corruption of our understanding, that the word of the cross is foolishness to us. The unregenerate man employs his understanding on such things only as fall under his senses, or as are confirmed to him by evident and necessary demonstrations. How then should the natural man

believe the gospel, which is not merely repugnant to the carnal mind, but which will not even submit to the trial of human reason? And in reality, how can a man, puffed up with human wisdom, do otherwise than call this faith foolishness, which some poor ignorant fishermen and other illiterate characters would obtrude on the whole world, and persuade them, that God infinitely happy in himself, should condescend so far as to take on him the form of a servant, to become a man of sorrows, nay, even to suffer the ignominious death of the cross?

It were folly indeed to attempt to subject the gospel to man's reason, since it far surpasseth his understanding. We seek not reasoning, but we submit our reason to the Scriptures. Our faith doth not rest on human arguments, but is grounded on the word of God. We are not saved by demonstrations, but by believing the gospel. Science is an habit acquired by demonstrations; but faith is the gift of God, which believeth things that our reason is not capable of demonstrating. The human understanding may comprehend science, but faith is infinitely superior to it. Could our understanding of itself have comprehended the gospel, the gospel had been unworthy the majesty of him, whose judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out. In short, the less our understanding comprehendeth the mysteries of the incarnation, sufferings, and death of the Son of God, the more doth our faith perceive that the power and wisdom of God are infinite.

S. DURAND.

I can by no means bear to hear that philosophy is the interpreter of Holy Writ. For it would then be no longer the portion of believers, of spiritual men, of babes, to understand the Scriptures, but of the wise and prudent (Matt. xi. 25), which is diametrically opposite to the dispensation of the New Testament; since God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth; and not a few wise and superior geniuses only. He will pour of his Spirit upon all flesh, that all may know him. As the Scriptures are so clear, in the articles necessary for our salvation, what necessity have we of philosophers to explain them? Jesus Christ and his apostles sought for a demonstration of their gospel not in

philosophy, but in the prophets. Who hath ever dared to make the Holy Ghost, that great Teacher of all the truth, dependent on philosophy? *We have received not the spirit of the world* (1 Cor. ii. 12), which indeed is the spirit of philosophers, *but the Spirit which is of God.*
J. H. HEIDIGGER.

Marks by which to ascertain whether we are partakers of Light and Grace in reading the Scriptures.

THOUGH the degrees of light and grace communicated by the Holy Spirit to different persons are various, for he divides *to every man severally as he will* (1 Cor. xii. 11), yet some general marks may be pointed out by which we may ascertain whether we are in any measure partakers of it. The believer feels his influence in turning him from sin to God, and exciting him earnestly to seek the salvation of his soul, as the one great object of his life. The Holy Spirit produces in him humility of mind, and a willingness to receive instruction. He manifests to him the wisdom of God in the great doctrines of the Bible, *being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*, and the necessity of *a new heart and a new spirit*. He leads him earnestly to desire to see the character and glory of God, to enjoy his presence, and to be conformed to his likeness. He inclines the heart to love holiness, because God is holy; and heaven, because it is a holy place; and he gives an efficacy to the word, making it powerful to excite and promote every holy temper and disposition. He enables him to say, *thy testimonies are my delight*; and through his influence, the believer often finds the Bible to be a source of the greatest comfort, filling him *with joy unspeakable*, and a hope *full of glory*. Reader! ask your own conscience, Have I experienced any of these things? Has the Bible been thus brought home to my heart? How can it be so if you have never diligently and perseveringly sought the influence of this blessed Guide and Comforter? REV. E. BICKERSTETH.

On the Difficulties of Revealed Religion.

SOME difficulties occur in the Christian revelation, which human reason can hardly

clear; but as the truth of it stands upon evidence so strong and convincing, that it cannot be denied without much greater difficulties than those that attend the belief of it, we ought not to reject it upon such objections, however mortifying they may be to our pride. That, indeed, would have all things made plain to us; but God has thought proper to proportion our knowledge to our wants, not our pride. All that concerns our duty is clear; and as to other points, either of natural or revealed religion, if he has left some obscurities in them, is that any reasonable cause of complaint? Not to rejoice in the benefit of what he has graciously allowed us to know, from a presumptuous disgust at our incapacity for knowing more, is as absurd as it would be to refuse to walk, because we cannot fly.

From the arrogant ignorance of metaphysical reasonings, aiming at matters above our knowledge, arose all the speculative impiety, and many of the worst superstitions of the old heathen world, before the gospel was preached, to bring men back again from the primitive faith; and from the same source have since flowed some of the greatest corruptions of the evangelical truth, and the most inveterate prejudice against it: an effect just as natural as for our eyes to grow weak, and even blind, by being strained to look at objects too distant, or not made for them to see.

Are, then, our intellectual faculties of no use in religion? yes, undoubtedly, of the most necessary use, when rightly employed. The proper employment of them is to distinguish its genuine doctrines from others erroneously or corruptly ascribed to it; to consider the importance and purport of them, with the connection they bear to one another; but first of all to examine with the strictest attention the evidence by which religion is proved, internal as well as external. If the external evidence be convincingly strong, and there is no internal proof of its falsehood, but much to support and confirm its truth, then surely no difficulties ought to prevent our giving a full assent and belief to it. It is our duty, indeed, to endeavour to find the best solutions we can to them; but where no satisfactory ones are to be found, it is no less our duty to acquiesce with humility, and believe that to be right which we know is above us, and belonging to a wisdom superior to ours.

Nor let it be said, that this will be an argument for the admitting all doctrines, however absurd, that may have been grafted upon the Christian faith: those which can plainly be proved not to belong to it fall not under the reasoning I have laid down (and certainly none do belong to it which contradict either our clear, intuitive knowledge, or the evident principles and dictates of reason). I speak only of difficulties which attend the belief of the gospel in some of its pure and essential doctrines, plainly and evidently delivered there, which being made known to us by a revelation supported by proofs, that our reason ought to admit, and not being such things as it can certainly know to be false, must be received by it as objects of faith, though they are such as it could not have discovered by any natural means, and such as are difficult to be conceived, or satisfactorily explained by its limited powers. If the glorious light of the gospel be sometimes overcast with clouds of doubt, so is the light of our reason too. But shall we deprive ourselves of the advantage of either, because those clouds cannot perhaps be entirely removed while we remain in this mortal life? Shall we obstinately and forwardly shut our eyes against *that day-spring from on high that has visited us*, because we are not as yet able to bear the full blaze of his beams? Indeed, not even in heaven itself, not in the highest state of perfection to which a finite being can ever attain, will all the counsels of Providence, all the height and the depth of the infinite wisdom of God, be ever disclosed or understood. Faith even then will be necessary, and there will be mysteries which cannot be penetrated by the most exalted archangel, and truths which cannot be known by him otherwise than from revelation, or believed upon any other ground of assent, than a submissive confidence in the divine wisdom. What, then, shall man presume that his weak and narrow understanding is sufficient to guide him into all truth, without any need of revelation or faith? Shall he complain that the ways of God are not like his ways, and past his finding out? True philosophy, as well as true Christianity, would teach us a wiser and modester part: it would teach us to be content within those bounds which God has assigned to us, *casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and*

bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. LYTTLETON.

The insufficiency of Natural Religion, and the necessity of the Christian Revelation.

DEISM, or the principles of natural worship, are only the faint remnants or dying flames of revealed religion in the posterity of Noah; and our modern philosophers, nay, and some of our philosophising divines, have too much exalted the faculties of our souls, when they have maintained that by their force mankind has been able to find out that there is one supreme agent or intellectual being which we call God; that praise and prayer are his due worship; and the rest of those deducements, which I am confident are the remote effects of revelation, and unattainable by our discourse, I mean as simply considered, and without the benefit of divine illumination. So that we have not lifted up ourselves to God by the weak pinions of our reason, but he has been pleased to descend to us; and what Socrates said of him, what Plato wrote, and the rest of the heathen philosophers of several nations, is all no more than the twilight of revelation, after the sun of it was set in the race of Noah. That there is something above us, some principle of motion, our reason can apprehend, though it cannot discover what it is, by its own virtue. And indeed it is very improbable that we, who by the strength of our faculties cannot enter into the knowledge of any being, not so much as of our own, should be able to find out by them that Supreme Nature, which we cannot otherwise define than by saying it is infinite; as if infinite were definable, or infinity a subject for our narrow understanding. They who would prove religion by reason do but weaken the cause which they endeavour to support. It is to take away the pillars from our faith, and prop it only with a twig; it is to design a tower like that of Babel, which, if it were possible, as it is not, to reach heaven, would come to nothing by the confusion of the workmen. For every man is building a several way; impotently conceited of his own model, and of his own materials. Reason is always striving, always at a loss; and of necessity it must so come to pass, while it is exercised about that which is not its proper object. Let us be content at last to know God by his own me-

thods; at least so much of him as he is pleased to reveal to us in the sacred Scriptures. To apprehend them to be the word of God is all our reason has to do; for all beyond it is the work of faith, which is the seal of Heaven impressed upon our human understanding.

DRYDEN.

They that are whole, need not a physician, but they that are sick. Had man continued in innocence, the religion of nature would have answered all the ends of his creation: he wanted no Redeemer in his natural state; for it would be absurd to suppose that Christ came to redeem man from the state and condition in which God made him. After the works of creation were finished, God liked them all, and *saw every thing that he had made; and behold it was very good*: in this state therefore nothing was wanting to the perfection of the creature: God was pleased with all his works, and with man especially, to whom he gave dominion over the rest of the world. In this state therefore there was no want of a reconciler between God and man; nor would there ever have been any such want had this happy state continued.

That innocence and virtue shall be rewarded, guilt and iniquity punished, is no more than what natural sense and reason have always taught the considering part of mankind: for the voice of reason and of the law are in this respect the same; *This do, and thou shalt live.* And though man is altered and changed, yet the nature of things is still the same; and he is no ill reasoner, who, from the abstracted consideration of virtue and vice, concludes, that virtue has a just title to reward, and vice deserves punishment: and it is no wonder that they who argue upon these general views only should imagine that moral virtue may still exalt a man to all the degrees of happiness that his nature is capable of.

In the celebrated question concerning the merit of good works, there has arose much confusion, for want of distinguishing between good works, simply and in their own nature considered, and considered as done or performed by the sons of men. The first is a single question; Whether virtue in its own nature has a title to reward? And who will deny it? For as sure as God is just, as sure as there is a

difference between good and evil, he will, he must reward the one, and punish the other. But when you ask, Whether the good works of men deserve and merit reward? you strangely alter the state of the question; for here not only the nature of good works, but the nature and condition of man must be considered too. If he has already concluded himself, if sentence is gone out against him, and his case be irretrievable, your question must be impertinent; because you ask, Whether he, who is already under condemnation for his evil works, may be rewarded for his good works?

Put the case, that a man ten years ago committed a secret and barbarous murder; that since he has lived in an unblameable submission and obedience to the government: ask then the question, Whether obedience and submission to the government have a right and title to protection and defence in life and fortune? Every man will answer, Yes. But ask again, Whether this man's obedience and submission have the same right and title? Every man will answer, No: because the villany committed long since puts him out of protection of the government, and justice is still indebted to him for the horrid fact; and whenever it meets him will execute upon him wrath and vengeance.

I intend not to press this instance to a parallel with our case: but thus much, at least, it shows, that virtue and morality may, in their own nature, and in themselves considered, deserve reward from a just and righteous Being; and yet the virtue and morality of man may not deserve it. And this is the parting point between the patrons of natural and revealed religion; the not considering which has made some imagine that, whilst we defend the authority of revelation, we give up the principles of reason and nature. Is there not, say they, an essential difference between virtue and vice? True, there is. Is not justice the attribute of God? and must not a just God reward virtue, and punish vice? True still. Is not this then, say they, a sufficient foundation for religion, without recurring to grace and faith, or miracles, or mysteries? True, it is, where native innocence is preserved, where religion is *res integra*: but what will you say of those who have already offended? Consult your principles of reason; the voice of nature is, that vice must

be punished: if so, all that offenders, all that sinners can expect from natural religion is the just reward of their sins and offences: and whether these are such terms and conditions as should endear natural religion to sinners, common sense shall judge. . . .

Some, I know, contend, that it may be proved, from the mercies and goodness of God, that he will forgive sinners. If so, there can be no such thing as natural religion: for it is demonstrable, from the justice of God, that he must reward virtue, and punish vice; and, if it be demonstrable too from his mercy that he must forgive sin, then natural religion includes the greatest contradiction in nature, that sin necessarily must, and necessarily must not be punished. If you say only, that it is probable that a merciful God will pity the folly and weakness of humankind, and recede from the strictness of justice in his dealings with them, so say we too; but probability cannot infer necessity; and, if it be not necessary that he should do it, it must then depend upon his will, whether he will do it or no; and your hopes and your religion must be resolved, not into the evidence of nature, but into the evidence of free grace; which evidence can be no other than revelation; for the Spirit only searcheth the deep things of God, and the Spirit only can bring them to light.

Would you then disprove revelation, and discard the religion of Christ? For once you must prove mankind to be in a state of innocence and purity, and then it will be senseless to talk of redemption; for what should innocence be redeemed from? You must show that nature is not vitiated or corrupted, that the flesh does not lust against the mind; but that there is a mutual agreement, and the flesh obeys the mind, and the mind obeys God: then you may at once reject the doctrine of repentance, of free grace, of justification through the blood of Christ. . . .

Innocence may challenge justice; but sin can only sue for pardon. Justice you may have from nature; but pardon you must have from grace and favor. It was an apophthegm of one of the wise men, Γνωθὶ σεαυτὸν, 'Learn to know yourself:' and this is the first thing necessary in order to choose your religion, rightly to know and understand your own condition. A condemned malefactor must not sue to

his prince in the same terms that a faithful and deserving subject may: the one may represent his service and obedience; the other has nothing to plead but his misery: one applies to the justice and generosity of the prince; the other to his pity and compassion. Consider then with yourself; can you stand a trial with God? Can you plead your services to him, and say, Behold thy servant; do unto him according to his works? If you can, justice will do you right: but if your heart mis-gives you; if your conscience cries out to you, Let us not enter into judgment with our God, for in his sight shall no man living be justified; what have you to do but to seek, if happily you may find, the mercy of God? . . . The fact then supposed, which cannot be contested, that mankind was in a state of corruption and degeneracy, it is manifest that they were fallen under the displeasure of God, or, in the language of Scripture, were become *children of wrath*. To redeem the world, therefore, it was necessary that God should be reconciled to sinners, and should pardon the offences which could not be recalled, or which, through infirmity of nature, could not be avoided. To think of a redemption on any other foot would be absolutely absurd; it would be an attempt to rescue sinners from the displeasure and anger of God, whether he would or no.

Look now into the gospel, and see how this case stands there. You will find that the only-begotten Son of God took our nature on him; and that by a perfect obedience to the voice of his Father, and a voluntary resignation of himself to the cross, he made and completed this reconciliation, and proclaimed the pardon of God to the lost sons of Adam. And in this properly consists the work of redemption.

But to redeem men from the displeasure of God, and leave them in a condition to draw it on themselves afresh every day, would have been a useless undertaking, and unworthy of his dignity who was employed in it. To secure therefore the benefit of the redemption which he had purchased with his blood to mankind, it was necessary to restore them to such a state as might render them fit objects for God to take pleasure in. This too he did by the powerful methods prescribed in the gospel for rectifying the corrupt and depraved wills of men, by the many revela-

tions relating to his own spiritual kingdom, given to clear and enlighten their understanding in the things belonging to their salvation; the knowledge of which had been lost, or so darkened and obscured by the fall, as to be of no efficacy in reforming the world. And to render these means effectual to the purposes of salvation, he promised and bestowed the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to enable men to receive and to lay hold of eternal life.

This is a short account of what Christ has done to save sinners. He has reconciled God to you: have you any reason to be offended? He has procured your pardon: has he injured you by so doing? If not, what is it any man has to complain of? . . .

The advantages procured for us, and the discoveries made to us by the gospel of Christ, do so correspond to the sentiments of nature within us, that it is wonderful to find the pretensions of nature set in opposition to the Christian revelation. The moral duties of the gospel are but the dictates of reason and nature carried into their just conclusions: the promises of the gospel contain the very hopes of nature confirmed and made sure to us. If the gospel has promised pardon to sinners, it is but what Nature teaches all her children to seek for: and if Nature teaches you to hope for mercy, is your case become the worse because God, through Christ, has promised it? Natural conscience tells us we are accountable to him who made us: is it not the same declaration made in the gospel, *That God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world?* Is not Nature ever looking out, and with unutterable groans panting after life for evermore? Has she any reason then to fly from him who hath *brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?*

Go then and learn of Nature to value these great gifts: attend to her silent voice within you: it will speak in the language of the apostle, and tell you, *This saying is worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*

BP. SHERLOCK.

The general Argument for the Truth of Christianity.

I SHALL now endeavour to give some account of the general argument for the

truth of Christianity, consisting both of the direct and circumstantial evidence, considered as making up one argument. . .

This revelation, whether real or supposed, may be considered as wholly historical. For prophecy is nothing but the history of events before they come to pass: doctrines also are matters of fact: and precepts come under the same notion. And the general design of Scripture, which contains in it this revelation, thus considered as historical, may be said to be, to give us an account of the world, in this one single view, as God's world; by which it appears essentially distinguished from all other books, so far as I have found, except such as are copied from it. It begins with an account of God's creation of the world, in order to ascertain and distinguish from all others, who is the object of our worship, by what he has done; in order to ascertain who he is, concerning whose providence, commands, promises, and threatenings; this sacred book all along treats; the Maker and Proprietor of the world, he whose creatures we are, the God of nature: in order likewise to distinguish him from the idols of the nations, which are either imaginary beings, i. e. no beings at all; or else part of that creation, the historical relation of which is here given. And St. John, not improbably with an eye to this Mosaic account of the creation, begins his gospel with an account of our Saviour's pre-existence, and that *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made* (John i. 3); agreeably to the doctrine of St. Paul, that *God created all things by Jesus Christ* (Eph. iii. 9). This being premised, the Scripture, taken together, seems to profess to contain a kind of an abridgment of the history of the world, in the view just now mentioned; that is, a general account of the condition of religion and its professors, during the continuance of that apostasy from God, and state of wickedness, which it every where supposes the world to lie in. And this account of the state of religion carries with it some brief account of the political state of things, as religion is affected by it. Revelation, indeed, considers the common affairs of this world, and what is going on in it, as a mere scene of distraction, and cannot be supposed to concern itself with foretelling, at what

time Rome, or Babylon, or Greece, or any particular place, should be the most conspicuous seat of that tyranny and dissoluteness, which all places equally aspire to be; cannot, I say, be supposed to give any account of this wild scene for its own sake. But it seems to contain some very general account of the chief governments of the world, as the general state of religion has been, is, or should be, affected by them, from the first transgression, and during the whole interval of the world's continuing in its present state, to a certain future period, spoken of both in the Old and New Testament, very distinctly, and in great variety of expression; *The times of the restitution of all things* (Acts iii. 21); when *the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets* (Rev. x. 7); when *the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people* (Dan. ii.), as it is represented to be during this apostasy, but *judgment shall be given to the saints* (Dan. vii. 22), and *they shall reign* (Rev. i. 6); and *the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.* (Dan. vii.) . . .

Together with the moral system of the world, the Old Testament contains a chronological account of the beginning of it, and from thence, an unbroken genealogy of mankind for many ages before common history begins; and carried on as much farther, as to make up a continued thread of history, of the length of between three and four thousand years. It contains an account of God's making a covenant with a particular nation, that they should be his people, and he would be their God, in a peculiar sense; of his often interposing miraculously in their affairs; giving them the promise, and, long after, the possession of a particular country; assuring them of the greatest national prosperity in it, if they would worship him, in opposition to the idols which the rest of the world worshipped, and obey his commands, and threatening them with unexampled punishments, if they disobeyed him, and fell into the general idolatry; insomuch, that this one nation should continue to be the observation and the wonder of all the world. It declares particularly, that *God*

would scatter them among all people, from one end of the earth unto the other; but that when they should return unto the Lord their God, he would have compassion upon them, and gather them from all the nations whither he had scattered them; that Israel should be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation, and not be ashamed or confounded, world without end. And as some of these promises are conditional, others are as absolute as any thing can be expressed, that the time should come, when *the people should be all righteous, and inherit the land for ever; that though God would make a full end of all nations whither he had scattered them, yet would he not make a full end of them: that he would bring again the captivity of his people Israel, and plant them upon their land, and they should be no more pulled up out of their land: that the seed of Israel should not cease from being a nation for ever.* (Deut. xxviii. 64. Ch. xxx. 2, 3. Isa. xlv. 17. Ch. lx. 21. Jer. xxx. 11. Ch. xlv. 28. Amos ix. 15. Jer. xxxi. 36.) It foretells, that God would raise them up a particular person, in whom all his promises should finally be fulfilled; the Messiah, who should be, in a high and eminent sense, their anointed Prince and Saviour. This was foretold in such a manner, as raised a general expectation of such a person in the nation, as appears from the New Testament, and is an acknowledged fact; an expectation of his coming at such a particular time, before any one appeared, claiming to be that person, and when there was no ground for such an expectation but from the prophecies; which expectation, therefore, must in all reason be presumed to be explanatory of those prophecies, if there were any doubt about their meaning. It seems moreover to foretell, that this person should be rejected by that nation, to whom he had been so long promised, and though he was so much desired by them. (Isa. viii. 14, 15. Ch. xlix. 5. Ch. liii. Mal. i. 10, 11, and Ch. iii.) And it expressly foretells, that he should be the Saviour of the Gentiles; and even that the completion of the scheme, contained in his book, and then begun, and in its progress should be somewhat so great, that, in comparison with it, the restoration of the Jews alone would be but of small account. *It is a light thing that thou*

*shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be for salvation unto the end of the earth. And, in the last days, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day, and the idols he shall utterly abolish.** The Scripture farther contains an account, that at the time the Messiah was expected, a person rose up, in this nation, claiming to be that Messiah, to be the person whom all the prophecies referred to, and in whom they should centre; that he spent some years in a continued course of miraculous works, and endued his immediate disciples and followers with a power of doing the same, as a proof of the truth of that religion which he commissioned them to publish; that, invested with this authority and power, they made numerous converts in the remotest countries, and settled and established his religion in the world; to the end of which, the Scripture professes to give a prophetic account of the state of this religion amongst mankind. . . .

Suppose now a person quite ignorant of history, first to recollect the passages above mentioned out of Scripture, without knowing but what the whole was a late fiction, then to be informed of the following facts, and to unite them all into one view: that the profession and establishment of natural religion in the world is greatly owing, in different ways, to this book, and the supposed revelation which it contains; that it is acknowledged to be of the earliest antiquity; that its chronology and common history are entirely credible; that this ancient nation, the Jews, of whom it chiefly treats, appear to have been, in fact, the people of God, in a distinguished sense; that, as there was a national expectation amongst them, raised from the prophecies, of a Messiah to appear at such a time, so one at this time

appeared claiming to be that Messiah; that he was rejected by this nation, but received by the Gentiles, not upon the evidence of prophecy, but of miracles; that the religion he taught supported itself under the greatest difficulties, gained ground, and at length became the religion of the world; that in the mean time the Jewish polity was utterly destroyed, and the nation dispersed over the face of the earth; that, notwithstanding this, they have remained a distinct numerous people for so many centuries, even to this day; which not only appears to be the express completion of several prophecies concerning them, but also renders it, as one may speak, a visible and easy possibility, that the promises made to them as a nation, may yet be fulfilled. And to these acknowledged truths, let the person we have been supposing add, as I think he ought, whether every one will allow it or no, the obvious appearances which there are of the state of the world, in other respects besides what relates to the Jews, and of the Christian church, having so long answered, and still answering to the prophetic history. Suppose, I say, these facts set over against the things before mentioned out of the Scripture, and seriously compared with them; the joint view of both together must, I think, appear of very great weight to a considerate reasonable person; of much greater, indeed, upon having them first laid before him, than is easy for us, who are so familiarised to them, to conceive, without some particular attention for that purpose.

All these things, and the several particulars contained under them, require to be distinctly and most thoroughly examined into; that the weight of each may be judged of, upon such examination, and such conclusion drawn as results from their united force. But this has not been attempted here. I have gone no farther than to show, that the general imperfect view of them now given, the confessed historical evidence for miracles, and the many obvious appearing completions of prophecy, together with the collateral things here mentioned, and there are several others of the like sort; that all this together, which, being fact, must be acknowledged by unbelievers, amounts to real evidence of somewhat more than human in this matter; evidence much more important than careless men, who

* Isa. xlix. 6. Ch. ii. Ch. xi. Ch. lvi. 7. Mal. i. 11. To which must be added, the other prophecies of the like kind, several in the New Testament, and very many in the Old, which describe what shall be the completion of the revealed plan of Providence.

have been accustomed only to transient and partial views of it, can imagine, and indeed abundantly sufficient to act upon. And these things, I apprehend, must be acknowledged by unbelievers. For though they may say, that the historical evidence of miracles, wrought in attestation of Christianity, is not sufficient to convince them that such miracles were really wrought, they cannot deny that there is such historical evidence, it being a known matter of fact that there is. They may say, the conformity between the prophecies and events is by accident; but there are many instances in which such conformity itself cannot be denied. They may say, with regard to such kind of collateral things as those above mentioned, that any odd accidental events, without meaning, will have a meaning found in them by fanciful people; and that such as are fanciful in any one certain way, will make out a thousand coincidences, which seem to favor their peculiar follies. Men, I say, may talk thus; but no one who is serious can possibly think these things to be nothing, if he considers the importance of collateral things, and even of lesser circumstances, in the evidence of probability, as distinguished, in nature, from the evidence of demonstration. In many cases, indeed, it seems to require the truest judgment to determine with exactness the weight of circumstantial evidence; but it is very often altogether as convincing, as that which is the most express and direct.

This general view of the evidence for Christianity, considered as making one argument, may also serve to recommend to serious persons, to set down every thing, which they think may be of any real weight at all in proof of it, and particularly the many seeming completions of prophecy; and they will find, that, judging by the natural rules by which we judge of probable evidence in common matters, they amount to a much higher degree of proof, upon such a joint review, than could be supposed upon considering them separately, at different times, how strong soever the proof might before appear to them, upon such separate views of it. For probable proofs, by being added, not only increase the evidence, but multiply it. BP. BUTLER.

The inward Witness to Christianity.

THE learned well know what need there is of turning over the histories of ancient

times, of the traditions and writings of the fathers, and all authors pious and profane; what need of critical skill in the holy languages and in ancient manuscripts; what a wide survey of various circumstances of fact, time, place, style, diction, is necessary to confirm one or another book or verse of the New Testament, and to answer the doubts of the scrupulous, and the bold objections of the infidel. Now how few of the common rank of Christians, whose hearts are inlaid with true faith in the Son of God, and with real holiness, have leisure, books, instruction, advantages, and judgment sufficient to make a thorough search into these matters, and to determine, upon a just view of argument, that these books were written by the sacred authors whose names they bear, and that these authors were under an immediate inspiration in writing them. What a glorious advantage is it then to have such an infallible testimony to the truth of the gospel wrought and written in the heart by renewing grace, as does not depend on this laborious, learned, and argumentative evidence of the divine authority of the Bible, or of any particular book or verse in it!

Secondly, if we consider what bold assaults are sometimes made upon the faith of the unlearned Christian by the deists and unbelievers of our age, by disputing against the authority of the Scripture, by ridiculing the strange narratives and sublime doctrines of the Bible, by setting the seeming contradictions in a blasphemous light, and then demanding, 'How can you prize, or how can you believe that this book is the word of God, or that the religion it teaches is divine?' In such an hour of contest, how happy is the Christian that can say, 'Though I am not able to solve all the difficulties in the Bible, nor maintain the sacred authority of it against the cavils of wit and learning, yet I am well assured that the doctrines of this book are sacred, and the authority of them divine; for when I heard and received them, they changed my nature; they subdued my sinful appetites; they made a new creature of me, and raised me from death to life; they made me love God above all things, and gave me the lively and well grounded hope of his love. Therefore I cannot doubt but that the chief principles of this book are divine, though I cannot so well prove that the very words and syllables

of it are so too; for it is the sense of Scripture, and not the mere letters of it, on which I build my hope. Though I cannot recollect all the arguments that prove Matthew, Mark and Luke to be divine historians, or Peter and Paul to be inspired writers; yet the substance and chief sense of these gospels and their epistles must needs be divine; for it has begun the spiritual and eternal life in my soul; and this is my witness, or rather the witness of the Spirit of God within us, that Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, and the religion that I profess and practise is safe and divine.'

And though there are many and sufficient arguments drawn from criticism, history, and human learning to prove the sacred authority of the Bible, and such as may give abundant satisfaction to an honest inquirer, and full satisfaction that it is the word of God; yet this is the chief evidence that the greatest part of Christians can ever attain of the divine original of the Holy Scripture itself, as well as the truth of the doctrines contained in it; namely, that they have found a holy and heavenly change passed upon them, by reading and hearing the propositions, the histories, the precepts, the promises, and the threatenings of this book; and thence they are wont to infer, that the God of truth would not attend a book, which was not agreeable to his mind, with such glorious instances of his own power and grace. . . . 'Why do you believe in Jesus?' asks the unbeliever. If you have this answer ready at hand, 'I have found the efficacy and power of the gospel in my heart;' this will be sufficient to answer every cavil.

The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians have a reference to our present subject. *Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us; written, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart* (2 Cor. iii. 2, 3).

DR. I. WATTS.

A short Summary of Historical Evidence.

THE truth of Christianity depends upon its leading facts, and upon them alone. Now of these we have evidence which ought to satisfy us, at least until it appear that mankind have ever been deceived by the same. We have some uncontested and incontestable points, to which the his-

tory of the human species hath nothing singular to offer. A Jewish peasant changed the religion of the world, and that, without force, without power, without support; without one natural source or circumstance of attraction, influence, or success. Such a thing hath not happened in any other instance. The companions of this person, after he himself had been put to death for his attempt, asserted his supernatural character, founded upon his supernatural operations: and, in testimony of the truth of their assertions, i. e. in consequence of their own belief of that truth, and in order to communicate the knowledge of it to others, voluntarily entered upon lives of toil and hardship, and with a full experience of their danger, committed themselves to the last extremities of persecution. This hath not a parallel. More particularly, a very few days after this Person had been publicly executed, and in that very city in which he was buried, these his companions declared with one voice that his body was restored to life; that they had seen him, handled him, ate with him, conversed with him; and, in pursuance of their persuasion of the truth of what they told, preached his religion, with this strange fact as the foundation of it, in the face of those who had killed him, who were armed with the power of the country, and necessarily and naturally disposed to treat his followers as they had treated himself; and having done this upon the spot where the event took place, carried the intelligence of it abroad, in despite of difficulties and opposition, and where the nature of their errand gave them nothing to expect but derision, insult, and outrage.—This is without example. These three facts, I think, are certain, and would have been nearly so, if the gospels had never been written. The Christian story, as to these points, hath never varied. No other hath been set up against it. Every letter, every discourse, every controversy, amongst the followers of the religion; every book written by them, from the age of its commencement to the present time, in every part of the world in which it hath been professed, and with every sect into which it hath been divided (and we have letters and discourses written by contemporaries, by witnesses of the transaction, by persons themselves bearing a share in it, and other writings following that age in regular suc-

cession), *concur* in representing these facts in this manner. A religion, which now possesses the greatest part of the civilised world unquestionably sprang up at Jerusalem at this time. Some account must be given of its origin; some cause assigned for its rise. All the accounts of this origin, all the explications of this cause, whether taken from the writings of the early followers of the religion (in which, and in which perhaps alone, it could be expected that they should be distinctly unfolded), or from occasional notices in other writings of that or the adjoining age, either expressly allege the facts above stated as the means by which the religion was set up, or advert to its commencement in a manner which agrees with the supposition of these facts being true, and which testifies their operation and effects.

These propositions alone lay a foundation for our faith; for they prove the existence of a transaction, which cannot even in its most *general* parts be accounted for, upon any reasonable supposition, except that of the truth of the mission. But the particulars, the *detail* of the miracles or miraculous pretences (for such there necessarily must have been), upon which this unexampled transaction rested, and for which these men acted and suffered as they did act and suffer, it is undoubtedly of great importance to us to know. We *have* this detail from the fountain-head, from the persons themselves; in accounts written by eye-witnesses of the scene, by contemporaries and companions of those who were so; not in one book, but four, each containing enough for the verification of the religion, all agreeing in the fundamental parts of the history. We have the authenticity of these books established, by more and stronger proofs than belong to almost any other ancient book whatever, and by proofs which widely distinguish them from any others claiming a similar authority to theirs. If there were any good reason for doubt concerning the names to which these books are ascribed (which there is not, for they were never ascribed to any other, and we have evidence not long after their publication of their bearing the names which they now bear), their antiquity, of which there is no question, their reputation and authority amongst the early disciples of the religion, of which there is as little, form a

valid proof that they must, in the main at least, have agreed with what the first teachers of the religion delivered.

When we open these ancient volumes, we discover in them marks of truth, whether we consider each in itself, or collate them with one another. The writers certainly knew something of what they were writing about, for they manifest an acquaintance with local circumstances, with the history and usages of the times, which could only belong to an inhabitant of that country, living in that age. In every narrative we perceive simplicity and undesignedness; the air and the language of reality. When we compare the different narratives together, we find them so varying as to repel all suspicion of confederacy; so agreeing under this variety, as to show that the accounts had one real transaction for their common foundation; often attributing different actions and discourses to the person whose history, or rather memoirs of whose history they profess to relate; yet actions and discourses so similar, as very much to bespeak the same character: which is a coincidence that, in such writers as they were, could only be the consequence of their writing from fact, and not from imagination.

These four narratives are confined to the history of the Founder of the religion, and end with his ministry. Since, however, it is certain that the affair went on, we cannot help being anxious to know *how* it proceeded. This intelligence hath come down to us in a work purporting to be written by a person, himself connected with the business during the first stages of its progress, taking up the story where the former histories had left it, carrying on the narrative, oftentimes with great particularity, and throughout with the appearance of good sense,* information, and candour; stating all along the origin, and the only probable origin, of effects which unquestionably were produced, together with the natural consequences of situations which unquestionably did exist; and *confirmed*, in the substance at least of the account, by the strongest possible accession of testimony which a history can re-

* See Peter's speech on curing the cripple (Acts iii. 18), the council of the apostles (xv.), Paul's discourse at Athens (xvii. 22), before Agrippa (xxvi.). I notice these passages, both as fraught with good sense, and as free from the smallest tincture of enthusiasm.

ceive, *original letters*, written by the person who is the principal subject of the history, written upon the business to which the history relates, and during the period, or soon after the period, which the history comprises. No man can say that this all together is not a body of strong historical evidence.

DR. PALEY.

Any irresistible Evidence of the Gospel unnecessary.

THE advocates of Christianity do not pretend that its evidence is so irresistible, that no understanding can fail of being convinced by it: nor do they deny it to have been within the compass of divine power to have communicated to the world a higher degree of assurance, and to have given to his communication a stronger and more extensive influence. But the not having *more* evidence is not a sufficient reason for rejecting that which we already have. If such evidence were *irresistible*, it would restrain the voluntary powers too much, to answer the purpose of trial and probation: it would call for no exercise of candour, seriousness, humility, inquiry; no submission of passions, interests, and prejudices, to moral evidence, and to probable truth: no habits of reflection; none of that previous desire to learn and to obey the will of God, which forms the test of the virtuous principle, and which induces men to attend with care and reverence to every credible intimation of that will, and to resign present advantages and present pleasures to every reasonable expectation of propitiating his favor. 'Men's moral probation may be, whether they will take due care to inform themselves by *impartial* consideration; and, afterwards, whether they will act as the case requires upon the evidence which they have. And this, we find by experience, is often our probation, in our temporal capacity.'

Farther, if the evidence of the gospel were irresistible, it would leave no place for the admission of *internal evidence*; which ought to bear a considerable part in the proof of every revelation, because it is a species of evidence which applies itself to the knowledge, love, and practice of virtue, and which operates in proportion to the degree of those qualities which it finds in the person whom it addresses. Men of *good* dispositions, among Christians, are greatly affected

by the impression which the Scriptures themselves make on their minds; and their conviction is much strengthened by these impressions. It is likewise true that they who sincerely act, or sincerely endeavour to act, *according* to what they believe, that is, according to the just result of the probabilities, (or, if the reader please, the possibilities,) in natural and revealed religion, which they themselves perceive, and according to a rational estimate of consequences, and above all, according to the just effect of those principles of gratitude and devotion, which even the view of nature generates in a well ordered mind, *seldom fail of proceeding farther*. This also may have been exactly what was designed. On the contrary, where any persons never set themselves heartily and in earnest to be informed in religion,—or who secretly wish it may *not* prove true, and who are *less* attentive to evidence than to difficulties, and *more* attentive to objections than to what has long since been most satisfactorily said in answer to them;—such persons can scarcely be thought in a likely way of seeing the evidence of religion, though it were most certainly true, and capable of being ever so fully proved.

REV. T. H. HORNE.

Faith without Reasoning.

MIGHT we but see a miracle, say some, how gladly would we become converts! They would not speak thus did they understand what conversion means. They imagine that this work consists in the bare acknowledgment of God; and that his worship is mere lip service, little different from that which the heathen offered to their idols. True conversion is to annihilate ourselves, before this Sovereign Being, whom we have so often provoked, and who, at any time, may justly destroy us: it is to acknowledge that we can do nothing without him, and that we merit nothing from him but his wrath: it is to know, that there is a natural opposition between God and ourselves; and that, without a Mediator, there could be no intercourse between us.

Think it not strange, that the simple should believe without reasoning. God inspires them with the love of his justice, and with hatred of themselves. He inclines their hearts to believe. No man ever believes with a true and saving faith, unless

God inclines his heart: and, when God so inclines the heart, we shall believe. Of this David was sensible when he prayed, *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies.*

That some men believe without having examined the proofs of religion, is because they are of a holy frame of mind, and because what they hear affirmed by our religion is agreeable to such a temper.

They are sensible that God made them. They desire to love him alone, to hate none but themselves. They are sensible that they cannot do this of their own powers; that they cannot come to God; and that, unless he come to them, they can have no communication with him. And they hear our religion declare that we ought to love God alone, and to hate none but ourselves; but as we all are corrupt and alienated from God, God has become man, that he might unite himself to us. There needs no more to persuade men, who have this disposition of heart, together with this apprehension of their duty, and of their inability.

Those who are Christians, without the knowledge of prophecies or evidence, do yet form as good a judgment of their religion as those who possess this knowledge. They judge of it by the heart, as others judge by the understanding. It is God himself who inclines them to believe; and hence their faith is of the most effectual kind.

I admit that one of these Christians, who believes without evidence, is not qualified perhaps to convince an infidel who asks for evidence. But those who are better informed can with ease demonstrate, that such a believer does truly receive his faith from the inspiration of God, though he be unable himself to prove this.

PASCAL.

The success of Christianity a proof of its Divine authority.

A RELIGION which taught men to be meek and humble, disposed to receive injuries, but not to do any; a religion which gave countenance to the poor and lowly, at a time when riches were adored, and ambition and pleasure had possessed the hearts of all mankind; that such a religion in such an age, by the sermons and conduct of fishermen, men of mean breeding and illiberal arts, should so speedily triumph over the philosophy of the world, and the arguments of the subtle, and the discourses of the eloquent, the power of

princes, and the interests of states, the inclinations of nature, and the blindness of zeal, the force of custom and the solicitation of passion, the pleasure of sin and the busy arts of the devil; that is, against wit and power, superstition and wilfulness, fame and money, nature and empire, which are all the causes in this world that can make a thing impossible; this, this is to be ascribed to the power of God, and is the great demonstration of the resurrection of Jesus. Every thing was an argument for it, and improved it; no objection could hinder it, no enemies destroy it; whatsoever was for it made the religion to increase; whatsoever was against it made it to increase. If the Christians had peace, they went abroad and brought in converts; if they had persecution, the converts came in to them. In prosperity they allured and enticed the world by the beauty of holiness; in affliction and trouble they amazed all men with the splendour of their innocence, and the glories of their patience. Quickly therefore it was, that the world became disciple to the glorious Nazarene; and men could no longer doubt of the resurrection of Jesus, when it became demonstrated by the certainty of those who saw it, and the courage of those who died for it, and the multitude of those who believed it; who by their sermons and their actions, by their public offices and discourses, by festivals and sacraments, by arguments of sense and experience, by reason and religion, by persuading unrational men, and establishing believing Christians, by their living in the obedience, and dying for the testimony of Jesus, have greatly advanced his kingdom, and his power, and his glory, into which he entered, upon his resurrection from the dead.

BP. TAYLOR.

The partial Reception of Christianity cannot justify its Rejection.

OR a revelation which really came from God, the proof, it has been said, would in all ages be so public and manifest, that no part of the human species would remain ignorant of it, no understanding could fail of being convinced by it.

The advocates of Christianity do not pretend that the evidence of their religion possesses these qualities. They do not deny that we can conceive it to be within the compass of Divine power to have communicated to the world a higher de-

gree of assurance, and to have given to his communication a stronger and more extensive influence. For any thing we are able to discern, God could have so formed men, as to have perceived the truths of religion intuitively; or to have carried on a communication with the other world, whilst they lived in this; or to have seen the individuals of the species, instead of dying, pass to heaven by a sensible translation. He could have presented a separate miracle to each man's senses. He could have established a standing miracle. He could have caused miracles to be wrought in every different age and country. These, and many more methods, which we may imagine, if we once give loose to our imaginations, are, so far as we can judge, all practicable.

The question therefore is, not whether Christianity possesses the highest possible degree of evidence, but whether the not having more evidence be a sufficient reason for rejecting that which we have.

Now there appears to be no fairer method of judging concerning any dispensation which is alleged to come from God, when a question is made whether such a dispensation could come from God or not, than by comparing it with other things which are acknowledged to proceed from the same counsel, and to be produced by the same agency. If the dispensation in question labor under no defects but what apparently belong to other dispensations, these seeming defects do not justify us in setting aside the proofs which are offered of its authenticity, if they be otherwise entitled to credit.

Throughout that order then of nature, of which God is the Author, what we find is a system of beneficence; we are seldom or never able to make out a system of optimism. I mean, that there are few cases in which, if we permit ourselves to range in possibilities, we cannot suppose something more perfect, and more unobjectionable, than what we see. The rain which descends from heaven is confessedly amongst the contrivances of the Creator, for the sustentation of the animals and vegetables which subsist upon the surface of the earth. Yet how partially and irregularly is it supplied! How much of it falls upon the sea, where it can be of no use! how often it is wanted where it would be of the greatest! What tracts of continent are rendered desert by

the scarcity of it! Or, not to speak of extreme cases, how much, sometimes, do inhabited countries suffer by its deficiency or delay!—We could imagine, if to imagine were our business, the matter to be otherwise regulated. We could imagine showers to fall, just where and when they would do good; always seasonable, every where sufficient; so distributed as not to leave a field upon the face of the globe scorched by drought, or even a plant withering for the lack of moisture. Yet, does the difference between the real case and the imagined case, or the seeming inferiority of the one to the other, authorise us to say that the present disposition of the atmosphere is not amongst the productions or the designs of the Deity? Does it check the inference which we draw from the confessed beneficence of the provision? or does it make us cease to admire the contrivance?—The observation which we have exemplified in the single instance of the rain of heaven, may be repeated concerning most of the phenomena of nature; and the true conclusion to which it leads is this: that to inquire what the Deity might have done, could have done, or, as we even sometimes presume to speak, ought to have done, or, in hypothetical cases, would have done, and to build any propositions upon such inquiries against evidence of facts, is wholly unwarrantable. It is a mode of reasoning which will not do in natural history, which cannot therefore be applied with safety to revelation. It may have some foundation in certain speculative *à priori* ideas of the Divine attributes; but it has none in experience, or in analogy. The general character of the works of nature is, on the one hand, goodness both in design and effect; and, on the other hand, a liability to difficulty, and to objections, if such objections be allowed, by reason of seeming incompleteness or uncertainty in attaining their end. Christianity participates of this character. The true similitude between nature and revelation consists in this; that they each bear strong marks of their original; that they each also bear appearances of irregularity and defect. A system of strict optimism may nevertheless be the real system in both cases. But what I contend is, that the proof is hidden from us; that we ought not to expect to perceive that in revelation, which we hardly

perceive in any thing ; that beneficence, of which we can judge, ought to satisfy us ; that optimism, of which we cannot judge, ought not to be sought after. We can judge of beneficence, because it depends upon effects which we experience, and upon the relation between the means which we see acting and the ends which we see produced. We cannot judge of optimism, because it necessarily implies a comparison of that which is tried, with that which is not tried ; of consequences which we see, with others which we imagine, and concerning many of which it is more than probable we know nothing ; concerning some, that we have no notion.

DR. PALEY.

The Gospel alone furnishes a consistent scheme of Religion.

THE gospel takes man where it finds him, in a state of sin and ruin, condemned by the law of God to final perdition, and incapable of justification, by his own righteousness. In this situation it announces to him a Saviour, divinely great and glorious, divinely excellent and lovely ; assuming his nature to become an expiation for his sins ; revealing to him the way of reconciliation to God ; and inviting him to enter it and be saved. The acceptance of this expiation it announces from the mouth of God himself. . . . To overcome the stubbornness of the heart, Christ has commissioned the Spirit of grace to sanctify us for himself, to draw us with the cords of his love, to guide us with his wisdom, to uphold us with his power, and to conduct us under his kind providence to heaven. In this scheme is contained all that we need, and all that we can rationally desire. The way of salvation is here become ‘ a highway, and wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein.’

The religion of the gospel is a religion designed for sinners. By the expiation of Christ it opens the brazen door which was for ever barred against their return. Here the supreme and otherwise immovable obstacle to the acceptance of sinners is taken away. If sinners were to be accepted, it was not *possible that this cup should pass from Christ*. The next great obstacle in the way of their acceptance is found in their unholy, disobedient hearts, propense *to evil only, and continually* ; and the next, their perpetual

exposure to backsliding, and to falling finally away. These obstacles, immovable also by any means on this side of heaven, the Spirit of grace, by his most merciful interference in our behalf, entirely removes. Man, therefore, in the gospel finds his return from apostacy made possible, made easy, made certain ; actually begun, steadily carried on in the present world, and finally completed in the world to come.

But no other scheme of religion presents to us even plausible means of removing these difficulties. Natural religion, to which infidels persuade us to betake ourselves for safety, does not even promise us a return to God. Natural religion is the religion of law ; of that law, which in the only legal language declares to us, *Do these things, and thou shalt live ; but the soul that sinneth shall die*. These things, the things specified in the requisitions of the law, we have not done ; and therefore cannot live. We have sinned, and therefore must die. The law knows no condition of acceptance or justification, but obedience. Concerning repentance, faith, forgiveness, and reconciliation, concerning the sinner’s return to God, and his admission to immortal life, the law is silent. Its only sentence pronounced on those who disobey is a sentence of final condemnation.

Whatever we may suppose the law to be, we have disobeyed its precepts. Nothing has been ever devised or received by man, as a law of God, which all men have not disobeyed. Infidels cannot devise such a law as they will dare to call a law of God, and publish to men under this title, which they themselves, and all other men, have not often disobeyed. From the very nature of law, a nature inseparable from its existence as a law, disobedience to its precepts must be condemned ; and if nothing interfere to preserve the offender from punishment, he must of necessity suffer. To what degree, in what modes, through what extent, these sufferings will reach, the infidel cannot conjecture. To his anguish no end appears. Of such an end no arguments can be furnished by his mind, no tidings have reached his ear, and no hopes can rationally arise in his heart. Death, with all the gloomy scenes attendant upon a dying bed, is to him merely the commencement of doubt, fear, and sorrow. The grave to him is the

entrance into a world of absolute and eternal darkness. That world, hung round with fear, amazement, and despair, overcast with midnight, melancholy with solitude, desolate of every hope of real good, opens to him through the dreary passage of the grave. Beyond this entrance he sees nothing, he knows nothing, he can conjecture nothing, but what must fill his heart with alarm, and make his death-bed a couch of thorns. With a suspense scarcely less terrible than the miseries of damnation itself, his soul lingers over the vast and desolate abyss; when, compelled by an unseen and irresistible hand, it plunges into this uncertain and irreversible doom, to learn by experience what is the measure of woe destined to reward those *who obey not God*, and reject the salvation proffered by his Son.

In such a situation what man not yet lost to sense and thought, not yet convinced that he has committed the sin which cannot be forgiven, would not hail with transport the dawn of the gospel; the clear rising of the Sun of Righteousness, to illumine his path through this melancholy world, to dispel the darkness of the grave, to shed a benevolent light upon the entrance into eternity, and brighten his passage to heaven?

DWIGHT.

The Gospel confirms and enlarges the hopes of Natural Religion.

ONE would imagine the gospel should easily find credit with men, when all its promises do so exactly tally and correspond with the hopes of nature. Has nature any reason to complain of this? Is it an objection to the gospel that it has confirmed all your hopes and expectations, that it has given you the security of God's promise to establish the very wishes of your heart? You trust, you say, that he who made you still retains some love for you: to convince you that he does, *he has sent his well-beloved Son into the world to save sinners*. Though you offend, yet you hope on repentance to be forgiven; the gospel confirms this hope; the terms of it are more beneficial, and convey to true penitents not only hope, but a claim to pardon. But pardon only will not satisfy; there is still something farther that Nature craves; something which, with unutterable groans, she pants after, even life and happiness for evermore. She sees all her chil-

dren go down to the grave; all beyond the grave is to her one wide waste, a land of doubt and uncertainty: when she looks into it, she has her hopes and she has her fears; and, agitated by the vicissitude of these passions, she finds no ground whereon to rest her foot. How different is the scene which the gospel opens! there we see the heavenly Canaan, the new Jerusalem; in which city of the great God there are mansions, many mansions, for receiving them, *who through faith and patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and immortality*. Our blessed Master has abolished death, and redeemed us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, that we may dwell in his presence as long as time itself shall last.

If we were to form a system of religion for ourselves, that should answer to all our wishes and desires, what more could we ask for ourselves than what the gospel has offered? The obedience required of us is the same to which we are antecedently bound, in virtue of that reason and understanding which make us to be men. The promises of the gospel extend to more than Nature could ever claim; ~~they~~ take in all her wishes, establish all her hopes, and they are offered by a hand that is able to make them good.

The conclusion of the whole is, that since the religion of a sinner must necessarily be founded in the hopes of mercy; since these hopes have at best but uncertain foundation in natural religion, and are liable to be disturbed and shaken by frequent doubts and misgivings of mind; we have great reason to bless and adore the goodness of God, who has openly displayed before our eyes the love that he has for the children of men, by sending *his well-beloved Son into the world, that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. SHERLOCK.

Necessity for inculcating the Doctrines as well as Precepts of the Gospel.

SOME are of the mind that the whole business of ministers is to be conversant in and about morality. For this fountain and spring of grace, (the righteousness and satisfaction of Christ,) this basis of eternal glory; this evidence and demonstration of divine wisdom, holiness, righteousness, and love; this great discovery of the purity of the law and vileness of sin; this first, great, principal subject of the

gospel, and motive of faith and obedience ; this root and cause of all peace with God, all sincere and incorrupted love toward him, of all joy and consolation from him, they think it scarcely deserves a place in the objects of their contemplation, and are ready to guess, that what men write and talk about it, is but phrases, canting, and fanatical. But such as are admitted into the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ will not so easily part with their immortal interest and concern therein. Yea, I fear not to say, that he is likely to be the best, the most humble, the most holy and fruitful Christian, who is most sedulous and diligent in spiritual inquiries into this great mystery, of the reconciliation of God unto sinners by the blood of the cross, and in the exercise of faith about it. Nor is there any such powerful means of preserving the soul in a constant abhorrence of sin, and watchfulness against it, as a due apprehension of what it cost to make atonement for it.

DR. OWEN.

How insufficient every human scheme is (however commended by all that is able and learned, and however designed to guard against real abuses,) how utterly ineffective every system, except the simple gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, dying for sinners, to maintain and carry forward the church of God ! The merely rational system of religion without the peculiarities of the Bible, is both inefficient and injurious. Talk they of policy ? the simplicity of Scriptural truth is the best policy. See what it did in Luther. You may perhaps, by human wisdom, escape the reproach of the cross, gain the admiration of man, rise to the highest ranks of human honor and emolument, but you part with truth, you lose your usefulness, you deteriorate the gospel, and you injure the cause of God. You may have the star-light of a cold, frosty night, but you lose the cheering, enlivening, and fructifying warmth of the glorious sun. What if the outworks are defended, where is the advantage, if those within the citadel withhold from us the privileges and the blessings of the kingdom ? May the witness for Christ never hand down to posterity a lifeless, inefficient, and human system, which thousands shall unprofitably follow, instead of the life-giving, and divine gospel, the power of God unto salvation !

BICKERSTERN.

Let us, who are appointed to inspire others with these sentiments, take care lest we neglect the most essential point of preaching. It is by no means sufficient to exhort, to preach morality, to insist on the practice of Christian virtues : but, if we are in earnest to make Christians, let the principal point of Christianity be our chief theme. The doctrine of Jesus Christ is not barely a doctrine of morality ; no, it is the doctrine of faith and of the cross, and all Christian morality is grounded upon faith in Jesus Christ ; hence it derives both its perfection and energy. Preachers of the gospel are perhaps not always sufficiently attentive to this consideration. A certain method of preaching has been introduced, which is very different from that of the apostles. Many make worldly eloquence their chief aim in preaching, and employ all their faculties upon it ; as if elegant discourses, brilliant thoughts, lively and bold expressions, or artful gestures, could convert men and make them Christians. Others preach rather like philosophers than as ministers of Jesus Christ. In preaching they imitate Plato, Socrates, or Seneca, and rarely venture beyond natural religion. This reasoning is great, this moral precept excellent ; the reflexions turn sometimes on the beauty of virtue, on the deformity of vice, sometimes on the good of society, at other times on the human heart. All these reflections may be just, and have their use ; but the principal matter in such discourses is deficient : Jesus Christ, his cross, his grace, his Spirit, come in for a very small share. The unction is wanting ; and can we wonder if such preaching be fruitless ?

Do we wish to lead men to God, let us begin by leading them to Jesus Christ. Let us preach the gospel, as our teachers, the blessed apostles, preached it. They gloried in being preachers of the cross ; they determined not to know any thing, either with respect to the ground of their doctrine, or the manner of preaching it, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

OSTERWALD.

The ignorant think highly of themselves, if instead of proclaiming the mysteries of faith, they insist on the necessity of speaking home to the conscience, preaching good works, and censuring vice. But they destroy the chief and essential part

of Christianity. It is an error to imagine that a good life consists in works only; as if a sound belief were not necessary to a Christian walk. It is an error to say, that preaching the mysteries of religion does not tend to the real improvement of the hearers. The same objection is made by the Jews, when speaking of the gospel, they ask, Can any one become a better man by knowing that Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, and that he was crucified, dead, and buried? It is again an error to suppose, that virtues ought to be taught by a bare description and by precepts, as morality is usually taught: for that is planting a tree by the branches, instead of planting it by the root. Let us here consider the motives, which God makes use of, when he insists on good works. The Scriptures invite us to the practice of virtue, and to the hatred of sin, because we have been baptised into the death of Jesus, and buried with him; because *Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us*; because *Christ was raised from the dead, and death hath no more dominion over him*. What arguments are these? In order to encourage us to good works the Scriptures introduce articles of faith. Nay, more; they invite us by reasons which might seem to imply even the contrary. Will this inspire us with fear, and wean us from sin, when we are told that we *are no longer under the law, but under grace*, and that *God hath appointed us to obtain salvation*? (Rom. vi. 14. Thess. v. 9.) Does not this belief seem to be rather suited (as some falsely imagine) to introduce libertinism, than the dread of sin? But let ignorance judge as it may; let it rate the mysteries by which faith is planted and watered entirely useless; this faith is still the root of all virtue; by it our hearts are purified; and without this it is impossible to produce good fruit.

JOHN DESPAGNE.

The genuine preachers of the gospel are those who give a faithful account of the history of Jesus Christ, and the fruits of it; who, when they call on men to forsake their sins, direct them to the merits of Jesus Christ only, and not to any supposed strength of our nature, for every thing that belongs to conversion and to the remission of sins. All such as separate, or mutilate these two objects, and talk of a conversion without Jesus Christ,

can by no means be deemed preachers of the gospel.

All ministers of the gospel are called to bear witness of Jesus. Jesus Christ himself called the apostles *his witnesses*, and the aim of their witness is, to bring all men to believe in Jesus Christ, and to ground their whole salvation upon him alone.

GUALTER.

The Glory of God Displayed in the Gospel.

THERE is nothing wherein God hath so much put himself, wherein he may be so fully known, communicated with, depended upon, and praised, as in his gospel. This is a glass in which the blessed angels do see and admire that unsearchable riches of his mercy to the church, which they had not by their own observation found out from the immediate view of his glorious presence. In the creatures we have him a God of power and wisdom, working all things in number, weight, and measure, by the secret vigour of his providence upholding that being which he gave them, and ordering them to those glorious ends for which he gave it. In the law we have him a God of vengeance and of recompense, in the publication thereof threatening, and in the execution thereof inflicting wrath upon those that transgress it. But in the gospel, we have him a God of bounty and endless compassion, humbling himself that he might be merciful to his enemies, that he might himself bear the punishments of those injuries which had been done unto himself, that he might not offer only, but beseech his own prisoners to be pardoned and reconciled again. In the creature he is a God above us, in the law he is a God against us; only in the gospel he is Immanuel, a God with us, a God like us, a God for us.

BP. REYNOLDS.

God will ever dwell in spotless light, howsoever we paint him and disfigure him here below: he will still be circled about with his own rays of unstained and immaculate glory. And though the gospel be not God as he is in his own brightness, but God veiled and masked to us, God in a state of humiliation and condescent, as the sun in a rainbow; yet it is nothing else but a clear and unspotted mirror of divine holiness, goodness, purity; in which attributes lies the very life and essence of

God himself. The gospel is nothing else but God descending into the world in our form, and conversing with us in our likeness; that he might allure and draw us up to God, and make us partakers of his divine form. Θεὸς γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος (as

Athanasius speaks) ἵνα ἡμᾶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ θεοποιήσῃ, 'God was therefore incarnated and made man, that he might deify us,' that is (as St. Peter expresseth it), make us *partakers of the divine nature*.

CUDWORTH.

SECTION II.—OF GOD.

The Being of God.

THERE is a God. Here I cannot help fearing, that when we endeavour to confirm this leading truth, with regard to the first and uncreated Being, by a long and labored series of arguments, we may seem, instead of a service, to do a kind of injury to God and man both; for why should we use the pitiful light of a candle to discover the sun, and eagerly go about to prove the being of him who gave being to every thing else; who alone exists necessarily, nay, we may boldly say, who alone exists, seeing all other things were by him extracted out of nothing, and, when compared with him, are nothing, and even less than nothing, and vanity. And would not any man think himself insulted, should it be suspected that he doubted of the being of him, without whom he could neither doubt, nor think, nor be at all? This persuasion, without doubt, is innate, and strongly impressed upon the mind of man, if any thing at all can be said to be so. . . .

But because we have too many of that sort of fools that say in their heart, *There is no God*; and if we are not to answer a fool so as to be like unto him, yet we are, by all means, to *answer him according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit*: again, because a criminal forgetfulness of this leading truth is the sole source of all the wickedness in the world; and, finally, because it may not be quite unprofitable nor unpleasant, even to the best of men, sometimes to recollect their thoughts on this subject, but, on the contrary a very pleasant exercise to every well disposed mind to reflect upon what a solid and unshaken foundation the whole fabric of religion is built, and to think and speak of the eternal Fountain of goodness and of all other beings, and consequently of his necessary existence; we reckon it will not be amiss to give a few thoughts upon

it. Therefore, not to insist upon several arguments which are urged with great advantage on this subject, we shall produce only one or two, and shall reason thus—

It is by all means necessary that there should be some eternal Being, otherwise nothing could ever have been; since it must be a most shocking contradiction to say that any thing could have produced itself out of nothing. But if we say that any thing existed from eternity, it is most agreeable to reason that that should be an eternal mind, or thinking Being, that so the noblest property may be ascribed to the most exalted Being. Nay, that eternal Being must of absolute necessity excel in wisdom and power, and indeed in every other perfection, since it must itself be uncreated, and the cause and origin of all the creatures; otherwise some difficulty will remain concerning their production. And thus all the parts of the universe, taken singly, suggest arguments in favor of their Creator.

The beautiful order of the universe, and the mutual relation that subsists between all its parts, present us with another strong and convincing argument. This order is itself an effect, and indeed a wonderful one; and it is also evidently distinct from the things themselves, taken singly; therefore it must proceed from some cause, and a cause endowed with superior wisdom; for it would be the greatest folly, as well as impudence, to say it could be owing to mere chance. Now it could not proceed from man, nor could it be owing to any concert or mutual agreement between the things themselves, separately considered, seeing the greatest part of them are evidently incapable of consultation and concert. It must therefore proceed from some one superior Being, and that Being is God, 'who commanded the stars to move by stated laws, the fruits of the earth to be produced at different seasons, the changeable moon to shine

with borrowed light, and the sun with his own.'

He is the monarch of the universe, and the most absolute monarch in nature; for who else assigned to every rank of creatures its particular form and uses, so that the stars, subjected to no human authority or laws, should be placed on high, and serve to bring about to the earth and the inhabitants thereof, the regular returns of day and night, and distinguish the seasons of the year? Let us take, in particular, any one species of sublunary things—for instance, man, the noblest of all—and see how he came by the form wherewith he is invested, that frame or constitution of body, that vigor of mind, and that precise rank in the nature of things, which he now obtains, and no other. He must certainly either have made choice of these things for himself, or must have had them assigned him by another, whom we must consider as the principal actor, and sole architect of the whole fabric. That he made choice of them for himself, nobody will imagine; for either he made this choice before he had any existence of his own, or after he began to be: but it is not easy to say which of these suppositions is most absurd. It remains, therefore, that he must be indebted for all he enjoys to the mere good pleasure of his great and all-wise Creator, who framed his earthly body in such a wonderful and surprising manner, animated him with his own breath, and thus introduced him into this great palace of his which we now behold, where his manifold wisdom, most properly so called, displays itself so gloriously in the whole machine and in every one of its wonderfully variegated parts.

The first argument, taken from the very being of things, may be further illustrated by the same instance of man; for unless the first man was created, we must suppose an infinite series of generations from eternity, and so the human race must be supposed independent, and to owe its being to itself. But, by this hypothesis, mankind came into the world by generation; therefore every individual of the race owes its being to another; consequently the whole race is from itself, and at the same time from another; which is absurd: therefore the hypothesis implies a plain and evident contradiction.

'O immense wisdom that produced the world! Let us for ever admire the riches and

skill of thy right hand;' often viewing with attention thy wonders, and, while we view them, frequently crying out with the divine psalmist, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches! From everlasting to everlasting thou art God, and besides thee there is no other.* And with Hermes, 'The Father of all, being himself understanding, life, and brightness, created man like himself, and cherished him as his own son. Thou Creator of universal nature, who hast extended the earth, who poisest the heavens, and commandest the waters to flow from all the parts of the sea, we praise thee, who art the one exalted God, for by thy will all things are perfected.'

In vain would any one endeavour to evade the force of our argument, by substituting nature in the place of God, as the principle and cause of this beautiful order; for either, by nature, he understands the particular frame and composition of every single thing—which would be saying nothing at all to the purpose in hand, because it is evident that this manifold nature, which in most instances is quite void of reason, could never be the cause of that beautiful order and harmony which is every where conspicuous throughout the whole system; or, he means a universal and intelligent nature, disposing and ordering every thing to advantage. But this is only another name for God; of whom it may be said, in a sacred sense, that he, as an infinite nature and mind, pervades and fills all his works—not as an informing form, according to the expression of the schools, and as the part of a compounded whole, which is the idlest fiction that can be imagined; for, at this rate, he must not only be a part of the vilest insects, but also of stocks, and stones, and clods of earth; but a pure, unmixed nature, which orders and governs all things with the greatest freedom and wisdom, and supports them with unwearied and almighty power. In this acceptance, when you name nature, you mean God. Seneca's words are very apposite to this purpose: 'Whithersoever you turn yourself, you see God meeting you. Nothing excludes his presence. He fills all his works. Therefore it is in vain for thee, most ungrateful of all men, to say that thou art not indebted to God, but to nature, because they are, in fact, the

same. If thou hadst received any thing from Seneca, and should say, thou owedst it to Annæus or Lucius, thou wouldst not thereby change thy creditor, but only his name, because whether thou mentionest his name or his surname, his person is still the same.'

An evident and most natural consequence of this universal and necessary idea of a God, is his unity. All who mention the term God, intend to convey by it the idea of the first, most exalted, necessarily existent, and infinitely perfect Being: and it is plain there can be but one Being endued with all these perfections. Nay, even the polytheism that prevailed among the heathen nations was not carried so far, but that they acknowledged one God, by way of eminence, as supreme and absolutely above all the rest, whom they styled the greatest and best of Beings, and the Father of gods and men. From him all the rest had their being and all that they were, and from him also they had the title of gods, but still in a limited and subordinate sense. In confirmation of this, we meet with very many of the clearest testimonies with regard to the unity of God in the works of all the heathen authors. That of Sophocles is very remarkable: 'There is indeed,' says he, 'one God, and but one, who has made the heavens, and the wide extended earth, the blue surges of the sea, and the strength of the winds.'

As to the mystery of the sacred Trinity, which has a near and necessary connexion with the present subject, I always thought it was to be received and adored with the most humble faith, but by no means to be curiously searched into, or perplexed with the absurd questions of the schoolmen. We fell by an arrogant ambition after knowledge; by mere faith we rise again, and are reinstated. And this mystery indeed, rather than any other, seems to be a tree of knowledge, prohibited to us while we sojourn in these mortal bodies. This most profound mystery, though obscurely represented by the shadows of the Old Testament, rather than clearly revealed, was not unknown to the most ancient and celebrated doctors among the Jews, nor altogether unattested, however obstinately later authors may maintain the contrary. Nay, learned men have observed, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are expressly acknowledged in the

books of the cabalists, and they produce surprising things to this purpose out of the book of Zohar, which is ascribed to R. Simeon, Ben. Joch, and some other cabalistical writers. Nay, the book just now mentioned, after saying a great deal concerning the Three in one essence, adds, that 'this secret will not be revealed to all till the coming of the Messias.' I insist not upon what is said of the name consisting of twelve letters, and another larger one of forty-two, as containing a fuller explication of that most sacred name, which they call Hammephorash.

Nor is it improbable, that some dawn at least of this mystery had reached even the heathen philosophers. There are some who think they can prove, by arguments of no inconsiderable weight, that Anaxagoras, by his *νοῦς*, or mind, meant nothing but the Son or Wisdom that made the world. But the testimonies are clearer, which you find frequently among the Platonic philosophers concerning the Three subsisting from one. Moreover, they all call the self-existent Being the 'creating word,' or 'the mind and the soul of the world.' But the words of the Egyptian Hermes are very surprising: 'The mind, which is God, together with his word, produced another creating mind; nor do they differ from one another, for their union is life.'

But what we now insist upon is, the plain and evident necessity of one supreme, and therefore of one only principle of all things, and the harmonious agreement of mankind in the belief of the absolute necessity of this same principle.

This is the God whom we admire, whom we worship, whom we entirely love, or, at least, whom we desire to love above all things; whom we can neither express in words nor conceive in our thoughts; and the less we are capable of these things, so much the more necessary it is to adore him with the profoundest humility, and to love him with the greatest intenseness and fervor.

ARR. LEIGHTON.

The Attributes of God.

THEOLOGICAL writers mention three methods whereby men come to some kind of knowledge of God themselves, and communicate that knowledge to others—the way of negation, the way of causation, and the way of eminence. Yet the very terms that are used to express these ways

show what a faint knowledge of the invisible Being is to be attained by them ; so that the two last may be justly reduced to the first, and all our knowledge of this kind called negative. For to pretend to give any explanation of the divine essence, as distinct from what we call his attributes, would be a refinement so absurd, that, under the appearance of more accurate knowledge, it would betray our ignorance the more. And so unaccountable would it be to attempt any such thing with regard to the unsearchable majesty of God, that possibly the most towering and exalted genius on earth ought frankly to acknowledge, that we know neither our own essence, nor that of any other creature, even the meanest and most contemptible. Though in the schools they distinguish the divine attributes or excellencies, and that by no means improperly, into communicable and incommunicable, yet we ought so to guard this distinction, as always to remember that those which are called communicable, when applied to God, are not only to be understood in a manner incommunicable and quite peculiar to himself, but also, that in him they are, in reality, infinitely different from those virtues, or rather, in a matter where the disparity of the subjects is so very great, those shadows of virtues, that go under the same name either in men or angels ; for it is not only true, that all things in the infinite and eternal Being are infinite and eternal, but they are also, though in a manner quite inexpressible, *himself*. He is good without quality, great without quantity. He is good in such a sense as to be called, by the evangelist, the only good Being. He is also the only wise Being ; *the only wise God*, saith the apostle. And the same apostle tells us, in another place, that *he only hath immortality*, that is, from his own nature, and not from the will or disposition of another. ‘ If we are considered as joined to or united with God,’ says an ancient writer of great note, ‘ we have a being ; we live, and in some sort are wise ; but, if we are compared with God, we have no wisdom at all, nor do we live, or so much as have any existence.’ All other things were by him brought out of nothing, in consequence of a free act of his will, by means of his infinite power ; so that they may be justly called mere contingences, and he is the

only necessarily existent Being. Nay, he is the only really existent Being ; τὸ ὄντως ὄν, or, as Plotinus expresses it, τὸ ὑπέροντως ὄν ; thus also the Septuagint speaks of him as the only existent Being, ὁ ὢν. And so also does a heathen poet. This is likewise implied in the exalted name Jehovah, which expresses his being, and that he has it from himself ; but what that being is, or wherein its essence, so to speak, consists, it does not say ; nor, if it did, could we at all conceive it. Nay, so far is that name from discovering what his being is, that it plainly insinuates that his existence is hid and covered with a veil. *I am who I am, or I am what I am.* As if he had said—I myself know what I am, but you neither know nor can know it ; and if I should declare wherein my being consists, you could not conceive it. He has however manifested in his works, and in his word, what it is our interest to know, that he is *the Lord God, merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness and truth*.

We call him a most pure Spirit, and mean to say, that he is of a nature entirely incorporeal ; yet this word, in the Greek, Hebrew, and all other languages, according to its primitive and natural signification, conveys no other idea than that of a gentle gale of wind, which every one knows to be a body, though rarefied to a very great degree ; so that when we speak of that infinite Purity, all words fail us ; and even when we think of it, all the refinements of the acutest understanding are quite at a stand, and become entirely useless.

It is, in every respect, as necessary to acknowledge his eternity, as his being ; provided that, when we mention the term God, we mean by it the first Being, supposing that expression to include also his self-existence. This idea of a first and eternal Being is again inseparably connected with an infinite degree of all possible perfection, together with immutability and absolute perseverance therein.

In like manner, if we suppose God to be the first of all beings, we must unavoidably therefrom conclude his unity. As to the ineffable Trinity subsisting in this unity, a mystery discovered only by the sacred Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, where it is more clearly revealed than in the Old, let others boldly pry into

it, if they please, while we receive it with an humble faith, and think it sufficient for us to admire and adore.

The other attributes that used to be mentioned on this subject may be supposed to be perfectly comprehended under the following three; power, wisdom, and goodness: for holiness, justice, mercy, infinite bounty, may be, with great propriety, ranked under the general term of goodness.

But rather than insist upon metaphysical speculations, let us, while we walk daily in these pleasant fields, be constantly culling fresh and never-fading flowers. When the psalmist cries out, *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and of his greatness there is no end*, 'he wanted to show,' says Augustine, 'how great he is. But how can this be done? Though he repeated *great, great*, the whole day, it would have been to little purpose, for he must have ended at last, because the day would have ended; but his greatness was before the beginning of days, and will reach beyond the end of time.' The poet expresses himself admirably well; 'I will praise thee, O blessed God, with my voice; I will praise thee also with silence; for thou, O inexpressible Father, who canst never be known, understandest the silence of the mind, as well as any words or expressions.' ABP. LEIGHTON.

The Omnipresence of God.

THE knowledge of God is not a bare knowledge, his presence is not an idle presence; it is an active knowledge, it is a presence accompanied with action and motion. We said just now that God was every where, because he influenced all, as far as influence could agree with his perfections. Remark this restriction, for as we are discussing a subject the most fertile in controversy; and as, in a discourse of an hour, it is impossible to answer all objections, which may be all answered elsewhere, we would give a general preservative against every mistake. We mean an influence which agrees with the divine perfections; and if from any of our general propositions you infer any consequences injurious to those perfections, you may conclude, for that very reason, that you have stretched them beyond their due bounds. We repeat it, then, God influenceth all things, as far as such influence agrees with his perfections.

ANTH.

When new beings appear, he is there. He influences their production. He gives to all life, motion, and being, Acts xvii. 28. *Thou, even thou art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host; the earth and all things that are therein; the seas and all that is therein; and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee*, Neh. ix. 6. *O Lord, I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them*, Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15, 16. *Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about. Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.*

When beings are preserved, he is there. He influences their preservation. *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thou preservest man and beast*, Psal. xxxvi. 5, 6. *When thou openest thy hand they are filled with good: thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth*, Psal. civ. 28, 29, 30.

When the world is disordered, he is there. He influenceth wars, pestilences, famines, and all the vicissitudes which disorder the world. If Nature refuse her productions, it is because he hath *made the heaven as iron, and the earth as brass*, Lev. xxvi. 19. If peace succeed war, he makes both. If *lions slay the inhabitants of Samaria*, it is *the Lord who sends them*, 2 Kings xvii. 25. When tempestuous winds break down those immense banks which your industry has opposed to them, when a devouring fire reduceth your houses to ashes, it is he who *makes the winds his messengers, and his ministers flames of fire*, Psal. civ. 4.

When every thing succeeds according to our wishes, he is there. He influenceth prosperity. *Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watch-*

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G

man waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows. It is God who giveth his beloved sleep, Psal. cxxvii. 1, 2.

When our understanding is informed, he is there. He influenceth our knowledge. For *in his light we see light,* Psal. xxxvi. 9. *He lighteth every man that cometh into the world,* John i. 9.

When our heart disposeth us to our duties, he is there. He influenceth our virtues. It is he who *worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,* Phil. ii. 13. It is he who *giveth us not only to believe, but to suffer for his sake,* chap. i. 29. It is he who *giveth to all that ask him liberally, and upbraideth not,* James i. 5.

When the grossest errors cover us, he is there. He influenceth errors. It is God who *sends strong delusions that men should believe a lie,* 2 Thess. ii. 11. *Go make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,* Isa. vi. 10.

When we violate the laws of righteousness, he is there. He influenceth sins, even the greatest sins. Witness Pharaoh, whose *heart he hardened,* Exod. iv. 21. Witness Shimei, whom *the Lord bade to curse David,* 2 Sam. xvi. 11. Witness what Isaiah said, *the Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of Egypt,* ch. xix. 14.

When magistrates, or earthly gods, consult and deliberate, he is there. He influenceth policy. It is he who *hath the hearts of kings in his hand, and turneth them as the rivers of water,* Prov. xxi. 1. It is he who *giveth kings in his anger, and taketh them away in his wrath,* Hosea xiii. 11. It is he who *maketh the Assyrian the rod of his anger,* Isaiah x. 5. *Herod and Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel did what his hand and his counsel determined before to be done,* Acts iv. 27, 28.

When we live, when we die, he is there. He influenceth life and death. *Man's days are determined; the number of his months are with him; he has appointed his bounds that he cannot pass,* Job xiv. 5. *To God the Lord belongs the issues from death,* Psalm lxxviii. 20. *He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up,* 1 Sam. ii. 6.

He influences the least events as well as

the most considerable. Not being fatigued with the care of great things, he can occupy himself about the smallest without prejudice to the rest; *number the hairs of our heads,* and not let even *a sparrow fall without his will,* Matt. x. 29, 30.

But, when God communicates himself to all, when he thus acts on all, when he diffuseth himself thus through the whole, he connects all with his own designs, and makes all serve his own counsels: and this is our third idea of his immensity and omnipresence. God is present with all, because he directs all.

Doth he call the creatures into existence? it is to manifest his perfections. It is to have subjects on whom he may shower his favors; it is, as it were, to go out of himself, and to form through the whole universe a concert resounding the Creator's existence and glory. *For the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and godhead, are understood by the things that are made,* Rom. i. 20. *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard,* Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3.

Doth he preserve his creatures? it is to answer his own designs, the depth of which no finite mind can fathom; but designs which we shall one day know, and admire his wisdom when we know them, as we adore it now, though we know them not.

Doth he send plagues, wars, famines? it is to make those feel his justice who have abused his goodness; it is to avenge the violation of his law, the contempt of his gospel, the forgetting and forsaking of the interest of his church.

Doth he afford us prosperity? it is to *draw us with the bands of love,* Hos. xi. 4; it is to reveal himself to us by that love which is his essence; it is to engage us to imitate him, who *never leaves himself without witness in doing good,* Acts xiv. 17.

Doth he impart knowledge to us? it is to discover the snares that surround us, the miseries that threaten us, the origin from which we sprang, the course of life we should follow, and the end at which we should aim.

Doth he communicate virtues? it is to animate us in our race; it is to convince us that there is a mighty arm to raise us from the abyss into which our natural cor-

ruption hath plunged us; it is that we may *work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that God worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Doth he send us error? it is to make us respect that truth which we have resisted.

Doth he abandon us to our vices? it is to punish us for some other vices which we have committed voluntarily and freely; so that, if we comprehend it, his love for holiness never appears more clearly than when he abandons men to vice in this manner.

Doth he raise up kings? it is always to oblige them to administer justice, to protect the widow and the orphan, to maintain order and religion. Yet, he often permits them to violate equity, to oppress their people, and to become the scourges of his anger. By them he frequently teaches us how little account he makes of human grandeurs, seeing he bestows them sometimes upon unworthy men, upon men allured by voluptuousness, governed by ambition, and dazzled with their own glory; upon men who ridicule piety, sell their consciences, negotiate faith and religion, sacrificing the souls of their children to the infamous passions that govern themselves.

Doth he prolong our life? it is because he *is long suffering to us*, 2 Pet. iii. 9; it is because he opens in our favor *the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, to lead us to repentance*, Rom. ii. 4.

Doth he call us to die? it is to open those eternal books in which our actions are registered; it is to gather our souls into his bosom, *to bind them up in the bundle of life*, 1 Sam xxv. 29; to mix them with the ransomed armies of all *nations, tongues, and people*, Rev. vii. 9.

Such are our ideas of the omnipresence of God. Thus God seeth all, influenceth all, directeth all. In this sense we are to understand this magnificent language of Scripture; *Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee*, 1 Kings viii. 27. *Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool*, Isa. lxvi. 1. *Where is the house that ye build unto me? do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord? am I God at hand, and not God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?* Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. SAURIN.

Practical Reflections on the preceding.

THIS attribute of God removes the greatest stumbling-blocks that sceptics and infidels pretend to meet with in religion. It justifies all those dark mysteries which are above the comprehension of our feeble reason. We would not make use of this reflection to open a way for human fancies, and to authorise every thing that is presented to us under the idea of the marvellous. All doctrines that are incomprehensible are not divine, nor ought we to embrace any opinion merely because it is beyond our knowledge. But when a religion, in other respects, hath good guarantees; when we have good arguments to prove that such a revelation comes from heaven; when we certainly know that it is God who speaks; ought we to be surprised, if ideas of God, which come so fully authenticated, absorb and confound us? I freely grant that, had I consulted my own reason only, I could not have discovered some mysteries of the gospel. Nevertheless, when I think on the immensity of God; when I cast my eyes on that vast ocean; when I consider that immense all; nothing astonishes me; nothing stumbles me; nothing seems to me inadmissible, how incomprehensible soever it may be. When the subject is divine, I am ready to believe all, to admit all, to receive all; provided I be convinced that it is God himself who speaks to me, or any one on his part. After this I am no more astonished that there are three distinct persons in one divine essence; one God, and yet a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghost. After this, I am no more astonished that God foresees all without forcing any; permits sin without forcing the sinner; ordains free and intelligent creatures to such and such ends, yet without destroying their intelligence, or their liberty. After this, I am no more astonished, that the justice of God required a satisfaction proportional to his greatness, that his own love hath provided that satisfaction, and that God, from the abundance of his compassion, designed the mystery of an incarnate God; a mystery which angels admire while sceptics oppose; a mystery which absorbs human reason, but which fills all heaven with songs of praise; a mystery which is the *great mystery*, by excellence, 1 Tim. iii. 16; but the great-

ness of which nothing should make us reject, since religion proposeth it as the grand effort of the wisdom of the incomprehensible God, and commandeth us to receive it on the testimony of the incomprehensible God himself. Either religion must tell us nothing about God, or what it tells us must be beyond our capacities, and, in discovering even the borders of this immense ocean, it must needs exhibit a vast extent in which our feeble eyes are lost. But what surprises me, what stumbles me, what frightens me, is to see a diminutive creature, a contemptible man, a little ray of light glimmering through a few feeble organs, controvert a point with the Supreme Being, oppose that intelligence who sitteth at the helm of the world; question what he affirms; dispute what he determines; appeal from his decisions; and, even after God hath given evidence, reject all doctrines that are beyond his capacity. Enter into thy nothingness, mortal creature. What madness animates thee? How dardest thou pretend—thou who art but a point—thou whose essence is but an atom, to measure thyself with the Supreme Being; with him who fills heaven and earth; with him whom *heaven, the heaven of heavens cannot contain?* 1 Kings viii. 27. *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? High as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?* Job xi. 7, 8. *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; the pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him? But the thunder of his power who can understand?* xxvi. 7-11. 14. *Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding,* ch. xxviii. 3, 4. *Who hath laid the measures thereof? who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Who laid the cornerstone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Who shut up the sea with doors, when I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it? when I brake up for it my decreed*

place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shall thou come and no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? ch. xxxviii. 5, 6, 7, &c. *He that reproveth God let him answer it,* ch. xl. 2. *O Lord, such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high; I cannot attain unto it! . . .*

If such be the grandeur of the God I adore, miserable wretch! what ought my repentance to be! I, a contemptible worm; I, a creature whom God could tread beneath his feet, and crush into dust by a single act of his will, I have rebelled against the great God; I have endeavoured to *provoke him to jealousy*, as if I had been *stronger than he*, 1 Cor. x. 22. I have insulted that Majesty which the angels of heaven adore; I have attacked God, with madness and boldness, on his throne, and in his empire. Is it possible to feel remorse too cutting for sins which the majesty of the offended, and the littleness of the offender, make so very atrocious?

If such be the grandeur of God, what should our humility be! Grandees of the world, mortal divinities, who swell with vanity in the presence of God, oppose yourselves to the immense God. Behold his eternal ideas, his infinite knowledge, his general influence, his universal direction; enter his immense ocean of perfections and virtues, what are ye? a grain of dust, a point, an atom, a nothing.

If such be the grandeur of God, what ought our confidence to be! *If God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. viii. 31. Poor creature! tossed about the world, as by so many winds, by hunger, by sickness, by persecution, by misery, by nakedness, by exile; fear not in a vessel of which God himself is the pilot.

But above all, if such be the grandeur of God, if God be every where present, what should our vigilance be! and, to return to the idea with which we began, what impression should this thought make on reasonable souls! *God seeth me. When thou wast under the fig-tree*, said Jesus Christ to Nathanael, *I saw thee*, John i. 48. See Eccles. iii. 23, 24, 25. We do not know what Jesus Christ saw under the fig-tree, nor is it necessary now to inquire: but it was certainly something which, Nathanael was fully persuaded, no mortal eye had seen. As soon, therefore, as

Jesus Christ had uttered these words, he believed, and said, *Rabbi, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.* My brethren, God useth the same language to each of you to-day: *when thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee.*

Thou hypocrite! when wrapped in a veil of religion, embellished with exterior piety, thou concealedst an impious heart, and didst endeavour to impose on God and man, I saw thee. I penetrated all those labyrinths, I dissipated all those dark-nesses, I dived into all thy deep designs.

Thou worldling! who, with a prudence truly infernal, hast the art of giving a beautiful tint to the most odious objects; who appearest not to hate thy neighbour, because thou dost not openly attack him; not to falsify thy promise, because thou hast the art of eluding it; not to oppress thy dependents, because thou knowest how to impose silence on them: I saw thee, when thou gavest those secret stabs, when thou didst receive those bribes, and didst accumulate those wages of unrighteousness, which cry for vengeance against thee.

Thou slave to sensuality! ashamed of thine excesses before the face of the sun, I saw thee, when, with bars and bolts, with obscurity and darkness, and complicated precautions, thou didst hide thyself from the eyes of men, *defile the temple of God, and make the members of Christ the members of a harlot*, 1 Cor. vi. 15.

My brethren, the discourses, which we usually preach to you, absorb your minds in a multitude of ideas. A collection of moral ideas perhaps confound instead of instructing you, and when we attempt to engage you in too many reflections, you enter really into none. Behold an epitome of religion! Behold a morality in three words! Return to your houses, and every where carry this reflection with you, *God seeth me! God seeth me!* SAURIN.

The Providence of God.

THAT God is, implies not only that he is eternal and self-existent, but also that he is to all other beings the spring and fountain of what they are and what they have, and consequently that he is the wise and powerful Creator of angels and men, and even of the whole universe. This is the first particular, that God is. The second, that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, ascertains the providence

and government of God, exemplified in its most eminent effect with regard to mankind; for providence extends further than this, and comprehends in it a constant preservation and support of all things visible and invisible, whether in heaven or earth, and the sovereign government and disposal of them. Mechanics, when they have completed houses, ships, and other works they have been engaged in, leave them to take their fate in the world, and, for the most part, give themselves no further trouble about the accidents that may befall them; but the Supreme Architect and wise Creator never forsakes the work of his hands, but keeps his arms continually about it to preserve it; sits at the helm to rule and govern it; is himself in every part of it, and fills the whole with his presence. So great a fabric could not possibly stand without some guardian and ruler; nor can this be any other than the Creator himself; for who can pay a greater regard to it, support it more effectually, or govern it with greater wisdom, than he who made it? 'Nothing can be more perfect than God; therefore it is necessary the world should be governed by him,' says Cicero; and, 'They who take away providence, though they acknowledge God in words, in fact deny him.' . . .

In maintaining the doctrine of Providence, we affirm, first, that the eternal mind has an absolute and perfect knowledge of all things in general, and every single one in particular. Nor does he see only those that are actually present, as they appear in their order upon the stage of the world, but, at one view, comprehends all that are past, as well as all that are to come, as if they were actually present before him. . . . And here, were any one to reflect seriously on the vast number of affairs that are constantly in agitation in one province or even in one city, the many political schemes and projects, the multiplicity of law matters, the still greater number of family affairs, and all the particulars comprehended under so many general heads, he would be amazed and overpowered with the thoughts of a knowledge so incomprehensibly extensive. This was the very thought which excited the divine psalmist's admiration, and made him cry out with wonder and astonishment, *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high; I cannot attain unto it.*

He not only knows all things and takes

notice of them, but he also rules and governs them. *He hath done whatsoever he pleased in the heavens and the earth*, says the psalmist. *He worketh all things*, says the apostle, *according to the counsel of his own will*. He does all things according to his pleasure, but that pleasure is influenced by his reason; all things absolutely, but yet all things with the greatest justice, sanctity, and prudence.

He views and governs the actions of man in a particular manner. He hath given him a law. He hath proposed rewards and annexed punishments to enforce it, and engage man's obedience. And having discovered, as it were, an extraordinary concern about him when he made him, as we have observed upon the words *Let us make man*, in like manner he still continues to maintain an uncommon good-will towards him, and, so to speak, an anxious concern about him; so that one of the ancients most justly called man 'God's favorite creature.' . . . The great difficulty upon this subject which perplexes men fond of controversy, and is perplexed by them, is, how to reconcile human liberty with divine providence, which we have taken notice of before. But to both these difficulties, and to all others that may occur upon the subject, I would oppose the saying of St. Augustine, 'Let us grant that God can do some things which we cannot understand.'

What a melancholy thing would it be to live in a world where anarchy reigned! It would certainly be a woful situation to all, but more especially to the best and most inoffensive part of mankind. It would have been no great privilege to have been born into a world without God and without providence; for, if there were no Supreme Ruler of the world, then undoubtedly the wickedness of men would reign without any curb or impediment, and the great and powerful would unavoidably devour the weak and helpless, 'as the great fishes often eat up the small, and the hawk makes havoc among the weaker birds.'

It may be objected, that this frequently happens even in the present world, as appears from the prophecies of Habakkuk, i. 15; but the prophet immediately after asserts, that there is a supreme Power which holds the reins in the midst of these irregularities; and though they are sometimes permitted, yet there is a determinate time appointed for setting all things to rights

again, which the just man expects, and, till it comes, lives by faith.

ABP. LEIGHTON.

The deliverances and successes of the people of Israel came not from themselves or their own efforts, but from God and his goodness. If their tyrannical oppressor in Egypt was forced to give them liberty, it was not because Israel took arms to break their yoke, raised troops, engaged in battles, undertook sieges, blocked up Pharaoh in his capital, or stormed him in his palace; but God alone fought for their release, and, arming his angels with the sword of vengeance, by their invisible hands slew all the first-born of the land for the deliverance of his people. Afterwards, if we see them cross the Red Sea, it was not that they equipped a fleet, built ships, collected pilots and expert mariners, and employed sails and rudders; but that God, by a wonderful favor, clave the gulf before them, and made for them a dry way through the waters. If their multitudes in the barren desert were fed without difficulty, the reason is, not that they labored the ground, sowed grain, planted trees, and reaped harvests either of corn or nourishing fruits, but that God himself prepared their bread, and rained it down every morning from heaven before the doors of their tents. If those who were bitten by fiery serpents recovered from the venomous wounds, it was the consequence neither of medicinal remedies nor of the virtue of herbs, nor of mineral preparations, nor of chemical compounds, nor of antidotes, but of God himself becoming their Physician, and miraculously curing them by the sight of a brazen serpent erected before their eyes. If they succeeded in crossing the Jordan, it was not by raising bridges over that river, seeking fordable places, attempting to swim over, or reaching the opposite bank by means of oars; but because God, present among their host in the ark, the symbol of His Majesty, arrested the waters in the midst of the channel, drove them backwards to their source, and thus left a free passage. Or again, if Israel became masters of Jericho, which opposed their establishment and conquests, it was not gained by assaults, trenches, warlike machines, battering rams, or minings, and the military forces of the tribes; but because the God of battles overturned by his mighty arm the walls of the insolent city; and this not

by the sword of soldiers, or the valour of captains, but simply by the breath of his priests.

What means this remarkable and mysterious conduct of God, if not that the success of Israel is not to be ascribed to their power and exploits, nor their subsistence to their industry, nor their victories to their conduct in battle; but that the whole glory belongs to the grace of God alone.

And as the deliverance of Israel was an express figure of the church's salvation, God thereby raised us to the knowledge of a nobler mystery; namely, that the salvation of men comes not from themselves, is not acquired by their own strength, depends not on their works, is not gained by the merit of their labors or virtues; but that it must be ascribed entirely to the grace of the Lord, who bestows it on us by the pure effect of his pity and goodness.

Du Bosc.

If ever pains were taken by the Almighty deeply to express any truth upon the mind of man, it was that of entire dependence upon himself, as the Author and Giver of all good. This he labored to inculcate upon the minds of the Israelites by the whole course of his proceedings. They were brought out of Egypt, not of their own motion or choice, but by his special call. He had provided a country for them, and he charged himself with conducting them into it. Pharaoh resisted them; difficulties were multiplied to oppose them; but every difficulty served only to enhance the greatness of the power which overcame it, and to point out more manifestly the hand of the Most High. The sea opened a passage for them, and swallowed up their pursuers: the strong rock in the desert poured out for them copious streams of water, which followed them in their course: a cloud miraculously shaded them from the intense heat by day, and a pillar of fire gave them light by night: manna fell around them, in sufficient quantity to support them all abundantly: their clothes waxed not old upon them, nor did their feet swell: quails came daily, and fell around their camp in such abundance as amply to supply all their wants. Were they bitten by serpents, they were miraculously healed by only looking to one of brass. Did they want to pass over into the country which God had given them, the waters of Jordan flowed back, and

left them a dry passage through its channel. And the walls of their enemies' cities fell down at their approach.—Could any facts indicate in a more striking manner the presence and the agency of the Almighty God? This was the very knowledge he intended to inculcate. He wished them to be thoroughly convinced—to be practically convinced, I mean (for there is a great difference between acknowledging the presence and agency of God with the understanding, and acknowledging them with the heart)—of the continual presence, constant superintendence, never-ceasing agency of that great and glorious Being who made us, and in whom we live and move and have our being.

More important knowledge than this of the providence of God cannot be learned by men. While we thus practically know the power and presence of God, we shall feel the dispositions which that knowledge ought to inspire; we shall watch over our conduct with a filial dread of offending him; we shall place an unbounded confidence in his wisdom to direct, his power to strengthen, his providence to defend, his goodness to bless us; we shall cease to have any will of our own, and become anxious only that his will should be done; we shall submit to him with perfect resignation, and endeavour in all things to obey his commands. This was the great end and aim of all the discipline with which God visited the Israelites in the wilderness: *Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways and to fear him.*

VENN.

Providence of God in restraining the Passions of men.

Which stilleth the noise of the sea, and tumult of the people (Psal. lxxv. 7). Tumults of the people could no more be stilled by the force of a man, than the waves of the sea by a puff of breath. How strangely did God qualify the hearts of the Egyptians willingly to submit to the sale of their land, when they might have risen in a tumult, broke open the granaries, and supplied their wants. (Gen. xlvii. 19. 21.) Indeed, if the world were left to the conduct of chance or fortune, what work would the savage lusts and passions of men make among us! How is it possible that any but an Almighty power can temper so many jarring principles, and rank so many quarrelsome and turbulent spirits

in a due order? If those brutish passions which boil in the hearts of men were let loose by that Infinite Power that bridles them, how soon would the world be run headlong into inconceivable confusions, and be rent in pieces by its own disorders!

REV. S. CHARNOCK.

Providence of God in overruling all Com-motions to the interests of the church.

THERE is the eye of God, that eye which runs to and fro throughout the whole earth in the wheels of worldly motions, even in the most dreadful providences in the world, that stare upon men with a grim countenance: *their rings were dreadful, and their rings were full of eyes* (Ezek. i. 18). All the overturnings in the world are subservient to the church's interest, though they are not visibly so, unless diligently attended. God orders the confusions of the world, and is in the midst of the tumults of the people. *The Lord sits upon the flood, yea, the Lord sits King for ever; the Lord will give strength to his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace* (Ps. xxix. 10, 11). He sits upon the flood as a charioteer in his chariot, guiding it with holy and merciful intentions to his people, to give them both strength and peace in the midst of them, and as the issue of them. By water and floods is frequently meant tumults and confusions in the world. If it were not so, why would our Saviour encourage his disciples and all their successors in the same profession, to lift up their heads when they hear of wars, if their redemption (Luke xxi. 25-28) were not designed by God in them? They are all testimonies of the nearer approaches of Christ in power and glory to judge the earth, and glorify his people. God's great end in the shaking of nations, is the performing those gracious promises to his church which yet remain unaccomplished. These earthquakes in the world will bring heaven to the church. The great revolutions in the eastern part of the world, the ruin of the Babylonian empire, the erecting the Persian, and all the means whereby it was brought about, God ordered, God foretold, God directed for Jacob's service. Cyrus, led by ambition, levies an army against Babylon; yet, though he was a ravenous bird, he was to execute the counsel of God, *calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel* (Isa. xli. 11), to be

an instrument for the delivery of the captived Jews, and the restorer of the ruined temple. He had called him out by name to make a great revolution in the world. He foretold by his prophet Isaiah, many years before, the means he should use in the siege of Babylon to attain the victory, the very dividing Euphrates, which was the great confidence of the Babylonians, *that say to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up the rivers* (Isa. xlv. 27); whereby it was as it were dried up for them to pass over; the very opening of the gates, *and the gates shall not be shut* (Isa. xlv. 1): the Babylonians in a presumptuous security had left them open, thinking it impossible the city could be taken, because of the river Euphrates; *I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight*; and what was the end of that great revolution and motion in that part of the world? See Isa. xlv. 4, *For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name*. This prophecy was when Jerusalem and the temple were standing. God casts about long before his people needs, for their welfare in the great revolutions and changes of the world; *that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid* (Isa. xlv. 28). Cyrus had no knowledge of this end of God; *though thou hast not known me* (Isa. xlv. 4, 5), twice repeated. Cyrus did not know God, neither did he know God's end; he acts his own purposes, and is acted by God to higher purposes than he understood. In all the siftings of nations, and sifting the church among the nations, as corn is sifted in a sieve, God designs not the destruction of his people, but the cleansing them, the separating the flour from the bran. REV. S. CHARNOCK.

The Providence of God to be judged by the ultimate end.

'Fix not your eye only upon the sensible operations of Providence, but the ultimate end.' . . . Had any of us been with Christ, and acknowledged him the Saviour of the world, and yet seen him crucified in such a manner by men, and judged only by that; what wise and what just construction should we have made of that Providence? Much the same as some of his disciples did: *We trusted that it*

had been he which should have redeemed Israel, Luke xxiv. 21. But the whole design is spoiled; we were fools, and he an impostor. Yet this, which seemed to be the ruin of redemption, was the necessary highway to it by God's constitution. No other way was it to be procured: *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory?* Ver. 26. His entrance into glory to perfect our salvation was the end of the sensible suffering, wherein he laid the foundation. As they charge Christ with imposture, not considering the end, so do we God with unrighteousness when we consider not his aim. The end both beautifies and crowns the work; the remarks of God's glory in the creation are better drawn from the ends of the creatures and their joint subserviency to them, than from any one single piece of the creation. We must not only consider the present end, but the remote end, because God in his providence towards his church hath his end for aftertimes. God acts for ends at a great distance from us, which may not be completed till we are dead and rotten. How can we judge of that which respects a thing so remote from us, unless we view it in that relation? God's aims in former providences were things to come; his aims in present providences are things to come. As the matter of the church's prayers, so the objects of God's providences are things to come. *Ask me of things to come, concerning my sons*, Isa. xlv. 11. The matter of their prayers then were, that God would order all things for the coming of the Messiah. The matter of the church's prayer now is, that God would order all things for the perfecting the Messiah in his mystical body. The whole frame of Providence is for one entire design. It is one entire book with seven seals, Rev. v. 1. The beginning of a book, as well as the middle, hath relation to the end. The design of God's book of providence is but one in all the seven seals and periods of time.

'Consider not only one single act of Providence, but the whole scheme, to make a conclusion.' The motions of his eyes are various, but all end in discoveries of his strength. Men do not argue from one single proposition, but draw the conclusion from several propositions knit together. It is by such a spiritual logic we are to make our conclusions from the ways of

Providence. As in the reading Scripture, if we take not the whole period, we may make not only nonsense, but blasphemy, as in that of the psalmist, *Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in unrighteousness*. If a man should read only *Thou art not a God*, and make a full stop there, it would be blasphemy; but reading the whole verse, it is excellent sense, and an honorable declaration of God's holiness. Such errors will be committed in reading the books of Providence if we fix our eyes only in one place, and make a full stop where God hath not made any. We judge not of a picture by the first draught, but the last lines; not by one shadow or colour, but by the whole composure. The wisdom of God is best judged of by the view of the harmony of Providence. The single threads of Providence may seem very weak, or knotty and uneven, and seem to administer just occasion of censure; but will it not as much raise the admiration to see them all woven into a curious piece of branched work? Consider therefore God's ways of working; but fully judge nothing till the conclusion, for that is to judge before the time. Judge not then of Providence at the first appearance, God may so lose the glory of his work, and you the comfort. CHARNOCK.

The Glory of God in Creation.

How great and glorious a character of God is presented to us by these perfections:

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever he had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, he is God! Possessed of perfect excellence, contemplating with infinite complacency his glorious attributes, and containing in himself a boundless sufficiency for the accomplishment of every thing great and desirable, he saw that it was becoming his character to unfold his perfections, and communicate his goodness, to an endless and innumerable race of beings. From an infinite height, he took a survey of the immeasurable vast of possible beings; and in an expansion without limits, but desolate and wild, where nothing was, called into existence with a word the countless multitude of worlds, with all their various furniture. With his own hand he lighted up at once innumerable suns, and rolled around them innumerable worlds. All these he so dis-

persed and arranged, as that all received light, and warmth, and life, and comfort ; and all at the same time he stored and adorned with a rich and unceasing variety of beauty and magnificence, and with the most suitable means of virtue and happiness. Throughout his vast empire, he surrounded his throne with intelligent creatures, to fill the immense and perfect scheme of being, which originally existed with infinite splendour in his own incomprehensible mind. Independent of all possible beings and events, he sits at the head of this universe, unchanged, and incapable of change, amid all the successions, tossings, and tumults, by which it is agitated. . . . Nothing can happen, nothing can be done, beyond his expectation, or without his permission. Nothing can frustrate his designs, and nothing disappoint or vary his purposes. All things, beside him, change, and fluctuate without ceasing. Events exist, and vanish. Beings rise, and expire. But his own existence, the thoughts which he entertains, the desires which he admits, the purposes which he forms, are *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. Throughout the coming vast of eternity also, and the boundless tracts of immensity, he sees with serene complacency his own perfect purposes daily and invariably advancing, with a regular fulfilment towards their absolute completion. In its own place, in its own time, and in its own manner, each exists in exact obedience to his order, and in exact accordance with his choice. Nothing lingers, nothing hastens : but his counsel exactly stands, and all his pleasure will be precisely accomplished. . . .

What a power must that be, which at one and the same moment works in every vegetable and animal system in this great world ; which upholds, quickens, and invigorates every mind ; which at the same moment also, acts in the same efficacious manner in every part of the solar system, and of all the other systems which compose the universe ! What must be the power of him who sends abroad every moment immense oceans of light from the sun, and innumerable such oceans from the stars ; who 'holds' all worlds in the 'hollow of his hand,' retains them exactly in their places, and rolls them through the fields of ether with unceasing, most rapid, and at the same time perfectly harmonious

motions ; and who, thus accomplishing every purpose for which they were made, prevents the least disturbance, error or imperfection ! . . .

These mighty exertions have been already made through many thousand years : still they are perfectly made. They are made without intermission, rest, or relaxation. From century to century the energy operates night and day, and operates now with the same force and effect as at the beginning. Every where it is seen, and is seen every where to be the same. It is therefore wholly unspent, and plainly incapable of being spent or diminished.

In this wonderful fact is exhibited unanswerable proof of that sublime declaration of the prophet : *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the Everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ?*

DR. DWIGHT.

Reflections on the Works of God.

Look ! are not the fields covered with a delightful verdure ? Is there not something in the woods and groves, in the rivers and clear springs, that soothes, that delights, that transports the soul ? At the prospect of the wide and deep ocean, or some huge mountain whose top is lost in the clouds, or of an old gloomy forest, are not our minds filled with a pleasing horror ? Even in rocks and deserts, is there not an agreeable wildness ? How sincere a pleasure is it to behold the natural beauties of the earth ! To preserve and renew our relish for them, is not the veil of night alternately drawn over her face, and doth she not change her dress with the seasons ? How aptly are the elements disposed ! What variety and use in the meanest productions of nature ! What delicacy, what beauty, what contrivance, in animal and vegetable bodies ! How exquisitely are all things suited, as well to their particular ends, as to constitute opposite parts of the whole ! And while they mutually aid and support, do they not also set off and illustrate each other ? Raise now your thoughts from this ball of earth, to all those glorious luminaries that adorn the high arch of heaven. The motion and situation of the planets, are they not admirable for use and order ? Were those (miscalled *erratic*) globes ever known to stray, in their repeated journeys through

the pathless void? Do they not measure areas round the sun ever proportioned to the times? So fixed, so immutable, are the laws by which the unseen Author of nature actuates the universe. How vivid and radiant is the lustre of the fixed stars! How magnificent and rich that negligent profusion, with which they appear to be scattered throughout the whole azure vault! Yet if you take the telescope, it brings into your sight a new host of stars that escape the naked eye. Here they seem contiguous and minute, but to a nearer view immense orbs of light at various distances, far sunk in the abyss of space. Now you must call imagination to your aid. The feeble narrow sense cannot descry innumerable worlds revolving round the central fires; and in those worlds the energy of an all-perfect mind displayed in endless forms. But neither sense nor imagination are big enough to comprehend the boundless extent with all its glittering furniture. Though the laboring mind exert and strain each power to its utmost reach, there still stands out ungrasped a surplusage immeasurable. Yet all the vast bodies that compose this mighty frame, how distant and remote soever, are by some secret mechanism, some divine art and force linked in a mutual dependence and intercourse with each other, even with this earth, which was almost slipped from my thoughts, and lost in the crowd of worlds. Is not the whole system immense, beautiful, glorious beyond expression and beyond thought? **BP. BERKELEY.**

The Christian's Views of the Works of God compared with those of the Atheist.

I SHALL consider the views which the atheist forms of the Natural World.

In this consideration I am disposed to allow the atheist all the advantages which he can derive from endowments or acquisitions. He may with my consent be what I well know he can be, a chemist, a botanist, a mineralogist, or an anatomist. He shall, if he pleases, be a mathematician, a natural philosopher, an astronomer, a metaphysician, or a poet. I mean that he may be any or all of these, so far as one man, of his opinions, can be reasonably supposed to sustain the several characters specified. I will not even avail myself of the celebrated remark of Lord Bacon, 'that a little philosophy will make a man

an atheist, but a great deal will make him a Christian;' although I entertain not a doubt of its truth. My business is not to dwell on minute things, but to show the nature of those which are of higher importance.

The atheist, then, may with enlarged understanding and skill contemplate the structure of the heavenly bodies. He may, with the eye of a naturalist, explore the organisation of the vegetable kingdom; may analyse the chemical principles and combinations of plants and minerals; and may trace, to use his own language, the hidden walks of Nature, in her mysterious progress through the system. Or with the imagination of the poet, and the science of the astronomer, he may be fascinated with the beauty, splendour, and sublimity of the landscape, or delighted with the distances, magnitudes, motions, harmony, and magnificence of the planetary and stellary systems; still his views of all these, and all other natural objects, although in his mind the most illustrious objects which exist will be poor and pitiable.

All of them, in his opinion, owe their being to fate, accident, or the blind action of stupid matter. They exist for no end, and accomplish none. They spring from no wisdom, and display none. They are therefore what they would have been, had they been made and moved by an intelligent cause, without any purpose or design in their creation, a vast apparatus of splendour and magnificence assembled together for nothing; an immense show, in which nothing was intended, and from which nothing can be gained. The mind, in surveying them, asks instinctively and irresistibly, how came this train of wonders into being? and is answered with nothing but perplexity and folly, but doubt and despair. In the same manner it inquires, of what use will this mighty assemblage of worlds and their furniture prove? The only reply is, of none. All, with all their motions, furniture, and inhabitants, are the result, and under the control, of that iron-handed necessity which exists in the blind operations of unconscious matter; that gloomy fate of the heathens, to which they sullenly submitted because they deemed it inevitable; and which, while it showered calamities in abundance, cut off every hope and every effort of the attainment of deliverance. To the wretch

whose mind is effectually imbued with this scheme of things, the universe is changed into a vast prison, where himself and his companions are confined by bolts and bars, forged by the hand of blind, immovable, and irresistible destiny; where no heart is found to pity their sufferings, and no hand to lend relief; where no eye looks with sympathy, and no ear listens with tenderness; where the walls reach to heaven, and are hung with clouds and midnight; and where every effort to escape conducts the miserable tenants only to the sullen cavern of despair.

Should the atheist, sick with the forlorn and hopeless contemplation, turn his eye from this scheme of things to his only alternative, the doctrine of chance, he will find himself equally distant from refreshment and from hope. Here, himself and all other beings in earth, sea, and sky, with all their properties and operations, are mere accidents, involved and perplexed in their movements, like the particles of dust in a whirlwind. In his view, if he understand his system, and will think consistently with himself, his thoughts, volitions, and efforts, the continuance of his own being, and that of all other things, are mere casualties, produced by no cause, upheld by no support, directed by no wisdom, and existing to no purpose. Mere abortions, precarious in the extreme, possessed only of a doubtful and fluctuating existence, they tremble and flutter in a dreadful state of suspense over the gloomy abyss of annihilation. All here is doubt and discouragement. Not a plan can be rationally formed, not a hope consistently indulged. Where every thing is to happen, if it exist at all; or where the result of the casualty is, with the same probability, seen to be any thing or nothing; it is plain that nothing can be expected. Against every expectation, the chances are millions of millions to one; for every supposable thing is as likely to exist as any other.

Should it be said, that the atheist refutes these declarations by his conduct, because he lives and acts like other men, and is no more influenced than others by a regard either to fate or chance, I answer, that the objection is erroneous. The atheist, instead of refuting these observations, refutes himself. He denies his own principles, and avails himself of the principles which he opposes. If he under-

stands his own scheme, he cannot but know that the necessity of existence, which he professes to believe, is irreconcilable with all freedom of mind, with all voluntariness, with all contrivance. He knows that connexion cannot spring from chance; that order cannot arise out of accident; that whatever exists fortuitously exists independently of all things else, and can never be connected with any other thing, by any moral or useful relation. If therefore he would think and act rationally, he would neither contrive, expect, fear, nor hope; neither build nor plant; neither reap nor gather; but would yield himself up to the control of irresistible destiny, or to the capricious disposal of contingency.

The works of God are in their own nature beautiful, magnificent, sublime, and wonderful; and by every eye which sees them their nature must in some degree be discerned. It is readily admitted, therefore, that the atheist himself, if he be not a sot, must in some degree perceive the sublimity and splendour which are inherent in the earth and the heavens. But from these illustrious attributes he subtracts immensely, when he denies that they owe their origin to an intelligent and eternal Mind; when he denies that they are moved and ruled by infinite perfection; and that by the same perfection they are conducted to a divine and glorious end, a purpose infinitely excellent and desirable. Without this consideration, all their lustre becomes feeble and fading; a dim taper, gradually declining on the sight towards a final extinction. At the same time, by attributing their existence to fate, chance, or matter, he contracts their greatness, and lowers their elevation to a measure equally humble and painful; and covers even the bright lights of heaven with a shroud of gloom and obscurity.

When the Christian beholds the earth and the heavens, how different are his views of the same illustrious objects? To him the vast congregation of worlds is the immense and eternal empire of the self-existent and omnipresent Jehovah, contrived by his boundless wisdom, chosen by his boundless goodness, and executed by his boundless power. This single thought, like the rising of the sun upon this benighted world, imparts to the universe, in a moment, a diffusive and illi-

mitable splendour, investing, explaining, and adorning all the beings of which it is composed. On all, the sublime impression of design is instamped as a living image, glowing in living colours. The universe becomes a vast assemblage of means, directed to an immortal purpose; arranged in perfect order, adjusted with exact symmetry, and operating with complete harmony: and all, from the glory of that purpose, and the perfection of their arrangement, symmetry, and operations, derive an elevation and grandeur, of which they are otherwise utterly incapable.

God, before whom all things are as nothing, is invested, by his perfections, with a greatness and sublimity, in comparison with which, all other magnificence, separately considered, becomes *less than nothing and vanity*. Eternal, omnipresent, and immutable power, wisdom, and goodness, are objects so high, so vast, that all the worlds and suns which they have created diminish, when compared with them, to *the drop of the bucket, and the small dust of the balance*. But in the view of the Christian, these worlds, and every thing which they contain, derive a glorious lustre, from being an immediate exhibition of these attributes, and of the incomprehensible Being in whom they reside. Wherever the Christian casts his eyes, he sees all things full of God. The omnipresent, all-creating, and all-ruling Jehovah lives, and moves, and acts, in every thing which meets his view. In the spring, he comes forth in his beauty and beneficence, clothes the naked world in the richest attire, and awakens universal life and joy. In the summer and the autumn, *he openeth his bountiful hand, and satisfieth the wants of every living thing*. In the winter, *he hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet*. The heavens recall to the mind of the Christian the day when God said, *Let there be a firmament; and there was a firmament*: in the sun, still resounds that voice which commanded, *Let there be light, and there was light*.

In the mean time, all things borne on, in the view of the atheist, in a blind and relentless career by irresistible necessity, or dancing in fortuitous and endless mazes, like the imaginary atoms supposed by him to have produced them, and therefore

dark, cheerless, and hopeless, are, in that of the Christian, directed by the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator; and are therefore to him full of expectation, hope, and comfort. Wherever he is, there God is. His ear is always open to his prayers; his eye, to his dangers, sorrows and fears; his hand, extended to supply, to relieve, to comfort, and to save. An Almighty Friend is every where found by him, in the crowd and in solitude, by night and by day; never absent, never forgetful, never unkind, never incumbered by any concerns which will prevent his wants from being regarded, nor surrounded by any difficulties which can hinder them from being supplied. Between this friend and him time and place can never intervene: he is every where, and is every where to him a God. DR. DWIGHT.

Regard of God for Holiness.

LET us not think holiness in the hearts of men here in the world is a forlorn, forsaken and outcast thing from God, that he hath no regard of. Holiness, wherever it is, though never so small, if it be but hearty and sincere, it can no more be cut off and discontinued from God, than a sunbeam here upon earth can be broken off from its intercourse with the sun, and be left alone amidst the mire and dirt of this world. The sun may as well discard its own rays, and banish them from itself into some region of darkness far remote from it, where they shall have no dependence at all upon it, as God can forsake and abandon holiness in the world, and leave it a poor orphan thing, that shall have no influence at all from him to preserve and keep it. Holiness is something of God, wherever it is; it is an efflux from him, that always hangs upon him, and lives in him: as the sunbeams, although they gild this lower world, and spread their golden wings over us, yet they are not so much here, where they shine, as in the sun, from whence they flow. God cannot draw a curtain betwixt himself and holiness, which is nothing but the splendour and shining of himself: he cannot hide his face from it; he cannot desert it in the world. He that is once *born of God shall overcome the world*, and the prince of this world too, by the power of God in him. Holiness is no solitary neglected thing; it hath stronger confederacies, greater alli-

ances, than sin and wickedness. It is in league with God and the universe: the whole creation smiles upon it: there is something of God in it, and therefore it must needs be a victorious and triumphant thing.

Wickedness is a weak, cowardly, and guilty thing, a fearful and trembling shadow. It is the child of ignorance and darkness; it is afraid of light, and cannot possibly withstand the power of it, nor endure the sight of its glittering armour. It is allied to none but wretched, forlorn and apostate spirits, that do what they can to support their own weak and tottering kingdom of darkness, but are only strong in weakness and impotency. The whole polity and commonwealth of devils is not so powerful as one *child of light*, one *babe in Christ*: they are not able to *quench* the least *smoking flax*, to extinguish one spark of grace. Darkness is not able to make resistance against light, but ever, as it comes, flies before it. But if wickedness invite the society of devils to it, (as we learn by the sad experience of these present times, in many examples of those that were possessed with malice, revengefulness, and lust,) so that those cursed fiends do most readily apply themselves to it, and offer their service to feed it, and encourage it, because it is their own life and nature, their own *kingdom of darkness*, which they strive to enlarge and to spread the dominions of; shall we then think that holiness, which is so nearly allied unto God, hath no good genius at all in the world to attend upon it, to help it and encourage it? Shall not the *kingdom of light* be as true to its own interest, and as vigilant for the enlarging of itself, as the *kingdom of darkness*? Holiness is never alone in the world, but God is always with it, and his loving Spirit doth ever associate and join itself to it. He that sent it into the world is with it, as Christ speaketh of himself, *The Father hath not left me alone, because I do always those things that please him*. Holiness is the life of God, which he cannot but feed and maintain wheresoever it is: and as devils are always active to encourage evil; so we cannot imagine but that the heavenly host of blessed angels above are busily employed in the promoting of that which they love best, that which is dearest to God whom they serve, the life and nature of God. *There is joy in hea-*

ven at the conversion of one sinner; heaven takes notice of it; there is a choir of angels that sweetly sings the epithalamium of a soul divorced from sin and Satan, and espoused unto Christ. What therefore the wise man speaks concerning wisdom, I shall apply to holiness: *Take fast hold of Holiness; let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life: Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life*, and of death too. Let nothing be esteemed of greater consequence and concernment to thee than what thou doest and actest, how thou livest. Nothing *without us* can make us either happy or miserable; nothing can either *defile us*, or hurt us, but what *goeth out from us*, what springeth and bubbleth up out of our own hearts. We have dreadful apprehensions of the flames of hell without us; we tremble and are afraid when we hear of *fire and brimstone*; whilst in the mean time we securely nourish within our own hearts a true and living hell:

— *et cæco carpirur igni*:

the dark fire of our lusts consumeth our bowels within, and miserably scorseth our souls, and we are not troubled at it. We do not perceive how hell steals upon us whilst we live here. And as for heaven, we only gaze abroad, expecting that it should come in to us from without, but never look for the beginnings of it to arise within, in our own hearts. CUDWORTH.

Of all the perfections of the Deity, none is more worthy of his nature, and so peculiarly admirable, as his infinite purity. It is the most shining attribute that derives a lustre to all the rest; he is *glorious in holiness*, Exod. xv. 11. Wisdom degenerates into craft, power into tyranny, mercy loses its nature, without holiness. He swears by it as his supreme excellency: *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David*, Psal. lxxxix. 35. It is the most venerable attribute, in the praise whereof the harmony of heaven agrees. The angels and saints above are represented expressing their ecstasy and ravishment at the beauty of holiness; *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory*, Isa. vi. 3. This only he loves and values in the creature, being the impression of his most divine and amiable perfection. Inferior creatures have a resemblance of

other divine attributes: the winds and thunder set forth God's power; the firmness of the rocks and the incorruptibility of the heavens are an obscure representation of his unchangeableness; but holiness, that is the most orient pearl in the crown of heaven, shines only in the reasonable creature. Upon this account man only is said to be formed after his image. And in men there are some appearances of the Deity, that do not entitle to his special love. In princes there is a shadow of his sovereignty, yet they may be the objects of his displeasure; but a likeness to God in holiness attracts his eye and heart, and infinitely endears the creature to him.

DR. BATES.

False Views regarding the Holiness of God.

THE world asserts that there are circumstances which justify sin. Strong temptation, for instance, is continually named as an extenuation of our faults. The dishonest man pleads the distress which prompted his crime as taking away its guilt. The young plead the passions of their age as diminishing the sin of indulgence. The violent and angry speak of the provocation which excited their resentment, as an excuse for their having yielded to it. The rich imagine that their plenty justifies the indolence and luxury in which they live. The poor suppose that poverty and suffering will excuse their discontent and neglect of God. Each man, in short, finds something in his own case which takes off the criminality of his sin; and each man ventures to imagine *that God is not of purer eyes than to behold the evil* which is done under such circumstances as his own. But even this is not the worst. The fence being once broken down, all manner of trespass is committed on the holiness of God. Having accustomed themselves to lose sight of the fear of God in one respect, men soon lose their fear of him in all. They begin by supposing that particular circumstances justify sin, and they end by thinking that no justification at all is wanted. They live loosely, they live profanely, they live in forgetfulness of God, and in neglect of his laws; they observe nothing except that which prudence, or fashion, or habit recommend as expedient; they live as it were without God in the world, and the language of their hearts, if not of their

mouths, is this:—*How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?* (Ps. lxxiii. 11.) In fact, we are not aware of the influence which is exercised over us in this respect, nor of the consummate art and indefatigable diligence with which the world has labored to conceal from our apprehensions the essential holiness of God. His other attributes are sometimes acknowledged as conducing to the peace of society, or are used in some perverted or distorted form for the purpose of affording consolation. The justice of God is held out as a source of terror to the lawless and the violent. The love of God is spoken of as the source of comfort. The mercy of God is named as the universal source of hope; but his holiness is never referred to, and every possible means is made use of to avoid its observation. An insurmountable jealousy appears to exist among men towards this peculiar quality; and as there is no obvious method of reconciling it with the lives they wish to lead, and the peace they desire to maintain, the utmost ingenuity of the world is exercised, and all the refinement of its art has been displayed, in endeavouring to conceal or to obscure it. To this cause we must ascribe the pains that have been taken to divest sin of all its grosser, more offensive qualities, and to present it in a form as captivating as possible to our natural feelings. To this cause we must ascribe the liberty universally granted in the world to every indulgence of the flesh, which does not materially interfere with the welfare of others, and the outcry which is raised against any peculiar watchfulness or self-restraint.

From the same cause arises that prejudice which has always prevailed in the world against pure and spiritual systems of religion, and the preference of those which consisted in forms, and included no close or sanctifying applications of truth to the conscience. In short, if we were to take at once a view of the state of society, and consider what was the object of its internal regulations, and its outward forms; if we were to estimate the effect produced by the levity of the world, as well as by the activity of the world; if we were to survey the tone of public proceedings and private conversations, we could hardly deny that the great apparent object seemed to be an endeavour to change the moral character of things, to diminish the guilt

of sin, and to lower the obligations to holiness; and in this way to undermine the authority of a law, which men have not the courage to reject, or the power to deny. For, in truth, how few are the occupations in the world which have not an obvious tendency to detract from the holiness of those that are engaged in them? How few are the amusements which do not take off from the horror with which sin ought to be regarded, and present it to the mind in some winning or ingratiating form? What is a great part of the literature, not of the heathen but of the Christian world, but a labored endeavour to recommend, or to excuse the indulgence of passions, which the gospel is expressly intended to subdue? What is the language of society, but a studied compromise of truth on the most important subjects? What are the habits of the world, but a system of evasion or defiance of acknowledged duties? and what is the universal result of an unrestrained conversation in the world, but indifference to the sacred character of things, and a careless view of sin, as if it lost its real guiltiness of nature, by the circumstances in which we saw it?

This, this indeed, appears to be the great danger to be dreaded from the world. We shall not hear the justice of God generally impeached there; we shall not hear his love or his mercy denied; but we shall find his holiness universally forgotten. We shall find sin spoken of in other terms than in those which his word supplies; and viewed in other ways than his nature would authorise us to entertain. The purity of his nature will either be confused by a mixture with his mercy, or else it will be degraded by being brought down to a similitude with ourselves. From either cause the same effect will result. The holiness of God will be lost sight of; and, as is universally the case, the character of the worshippers will be assimilated to that of the Deity whom they adore: and the world, having formed to itself the idea of a Deity who can behold evil with complacency, and who can, under some circumstances, look upon iniquity with forbearance, will grow more and more indifferent to the moral distinctions of actions, and will call good evil, and evil good, by a different rule from that which the word of God exhibits.

And may I not appeal to your own hearts whether this is not the prevailing

feeling in the world? Where do we see that sensibility of soul, that godly fear of sin, that dread of being separated from God, that purity of mind and heart which flies from every sort of corruption, hating even the garment spotted with the flesh; hating those very weaknesses of nature which subject us to the influence of sin? There are cares in the world, and there are sorrows in the world, and there are labors in the world; but they are not of a godly sort, nor are they referred to the holiness of God as their principle. Men are eaten up with care, but it is not with care for their soul's health, with care to keep clear of sin; but it is with care about preserving their gains undiminished, or increasing their property. Men are worn out with sorrow; but it is not for having lost God's favor, but for having lost the opportunity of making money, or for having lost their lot of comfort in this world. Men labor; but it is not to keep a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards men; but it is to push their fortunes or to secure their interests. For these things they care, and grieve, and labor, as if they were worth the toil. For these things they take pains, for they know that pains are necessary; they know that men will be strict, that offences will be noted, that neglect will be injurious, and that the world will resent inattention and indifference in those who profess to seek for its advantages. But how different is their behaviour when they look towards their Maker? Here, how careless, how neglectful, how at ease they seem to be! They obey, or not, just as it suits their convenience. They feel no compunction when they have erred. They feel no misgiving when they refuse obedience. They seem to imagine that God must be satisfied with what they choose to give; and that their will, not his will; their convenience, not his honor, are the things to be considered. In this way they sin wilfully, they sin continually, they sin without feeling, they sin without regret; they despise the laws of God, they neglect his sabbaths, they profane his name, they forget him as absolutely as if he did not exist, and say that they do no harm; and then, having thus heaped insult upon insult, and added defiance to neglect, they think that they may come at any moment they choose, at some convenient sabbath, or at any hour when trouble sends them

to seek comfort, and be sure of the fullest acceptance from their neglected, their dishonored, their offended Maker!

REV. H. RAIKES.

The Love of God.

It is too plain, that if God had cared as little for us as we cared for God we should have been long since outcast, forsaken, and forgotten: but *herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* And thus it is stated by St. Paul: *God commended his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us:* and again, *When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* In these passages we perceive that it means the same thing to be a sinner—to be the enemy of God—and not to love him; and yet for these sinners, for these his enemies, he sent his own Son to be the propitiation for their sins.

Herein is love! The apostle seems to pronounce upon this as if there was no other love in all the world besides; as if every thing like love was swallowed up in this boundless profusion of mercies. It is extraordinary with what cold and composed feelings we can read and think of this extraordinary sacrifice. It is no doubt impossible to comprehend its full extent; perhaps it is the employment of blessed spirits, for ages and ages to come—aye, or for all eternity, to make new discoveries in the love of God and the death of the Redeemer. Grander knowledge,—new blessings,—fresh features, from this wonderful sacrifice, may be showing themselves to the spirits of just men made perfect at every moment, world without end. They are *things which the angels desire to look into.*

But God has given us, perhaps, the fullest idea of it that we are capable of conceiving, when he tells us that he was his Son—his only Son. It is as if he desired every one of us to go to his own heart, and find out who is the being upon the earth that is dearest to its affections—husband, wife, or only child; the person whom we regarded with the fondest love and the most unbounded delight; the person in whom your whole soul seems to be wrapped up; in whom you almost live, and move, and have your being; and to imagine this object of your hopes and affections dashed from a state of happi-

ness, and flung helpless into the midst of enemies and persecutors; become *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;* and at length brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and then descending into the grave with torture, insult, and infamy. God himself seems to teach us to regard it in this point of view; for he said unto Abraham, *Take now thy son—thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest.* He repeats it, as if for the purpose of cutting the father's heart, and giving it a new stab at every word of fondness. *Take now thy son—thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of.* Abraham rose up, and took Isaac his son, and went into the place of which God had told him. Then, on the way, a conversation occurs, in which every word that the son speaks is calculated to make the father's heart bleed freshly. It would be an insult to tell a father what were Abraham's feelings when he bound his son, and took the knife in his hand. At that moment, however, the angel of the Lord called out of heaven, and bade him stay his hand. But when the Son of God bore his cross to the spot of agony and shame, and was laid bleeding upon the altar, no guardian angel descended to relieve his sufferings; and when he cried, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?* the whole host of heaven stood still: no voice of consolation was heard, and no minister of mercy descended to save his Son—his only Son, whom he loved.

Such is the idea that God has given us of his love; but still it is imperfect, for it seems as if every thing relating to God was infinite. His power is infinite; and we should judge but poorly of its greatness if we measured it by human power. In like manner his wisdom is infinite; and we should never be able to conceive its extent by comparing it with the greatest wisdom of man. So also may we conclude of his love. The sufferings of Christ appear to contain something in them indescribable to the human imagination, and unfathomable to human discovery. His mysterious agony in the garden, the weight of our sins upon his soul, and the fearful exclamation, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?* convey an idea of suffering that we neither do nor can comprehend. Such is the love of God mani-

fested upon the cross—the love of God manifest in the flesh!

But, we may say, where was the necessity of all this vast profusion of suffering; this expenditure of means; this astonishing machinery of redemption? Could not God have forgiven us at a word? Now, only consider what idea it is we form of God, when we imagine that forgiveness is so very easy a matter. We conceive him to be an arbitrary and capricious Being, who can make laws and break them at random, and fling his pardon to his creatures carelessly from his throne. Is this a worthy idea of him *who cannot lie, and who cannot repent*? Recollect that mercy, with us, means the reversing of a law, the changing of an established order of things: our very idea of mercy implies an imperfection in the law, in the decision upon the law, or in the execution of the law. If human laws were perfect, or human judges infallible, where would be the room for mercy? It was a question reserved for the wisdom of Almighty God alone, to prove how justice and mercy could be reconciled; to hold forth forgiveness to the offender without violating, relaxing, or suspending that law, which is *holy, and just, and good*. Accordingly we find that, upon the cross, the violation of that law was visited to the uttermost; that *he bore our sins, and carried our iniquities*; that *the chastisement of our peace was upon him*: and thus we are told, in the passage before us, that *the love of God was manifested in sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*: and again, *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself*.

It is a terrible truth, which men would do well to recollect more than they do, that the same cross shows God's hatred for sin as well as his love for the sinner; the same cross shows that he cannot forgive iniquity, and yet that he was willing to visit it upon his own Son for our sakes: it shows us his wrath and his love, and the one appears to be the measure of the other. We have been this day endeavouring to fathom his love, and have found it impossible; and yet the very immensity of that love seems to consist in averting wrath, that is equally boundless and inconceivable. Alas! alas! we deceive ourselves strangely by fancying that it is an easy thing for God to forgive sin. Consider well what it is that makes it such an easy thing for you to commit sin;

and you will find that it is because you fancy it an easy thing for God to forgive it.

The great and fearful question with every man amongst us is, *Has the blood of Jesus Christ cleansed us from all sin?* or, shall he himself abide the awful consequences in the eternal world? For, as surely as God is true, one or other of these must be the case. The word of God supplies us with the means of judgment—*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*. It seems to be founded upon a principle plain and obvious to any man's common sense; if we need no change, we need no mercy. REV. C. WOLFE.

False Views regarding the Mercy of God.

THE holiness and justice of God makes him an irreconcilable enemy to all sin, and the only refuge sinners have, is in the goodness of God; but goodness does not so necessarily prove that God will forgive sin, as justice does that he will punish it. For goodness in its own nature must give place to justice, that is, goodness cannot pardon, while it is unjust to pardon; for an unjust goodness is no divine perfection.

So that the goodness of God, how great soever we conceive it to be, (and we cannot conceive it greater than it is,) does not necessarily prove that God must or will pardon sinners, but only that he will pardon sinners when it is wise and just to do so: but who can tell when God will think it wise and just to do so, without a revelation? or who can tell what it is that makes it wise and just for a good God to forgive sins? A good man does not always think himself bound to forgive those personal injuries and affronts which are offered him, much less is a kind and merciful prince, who is entrusted with the administration of justice, and the sacred authority of government, bound to forgive every malefactor out of pure good nature, which would soon dissolve government, and make authority contemptible; and if we consider God as the Supreme Governor of the world, it will satisfy us, that to forgive sins is not the immediate effect of goodness, but must be tempered and accommodated to the justice and wisdom of government; which we understand so little of, that we can never certainly learn from the mere light of nature when and upon what terms God will forgive sin.

The general hope and expectation of

mankind is, that God will forgive all humble penitent sinners; and yet I cannot find, that any man ever thought, that mere repentance was sufficient to obtain our pardon; for all religions had some instituted rites to appease their gods; which seems to argue that natural sense they all had, that some atonement and expiation as well as repentance was necessary to pardon.

Nor can reason prove the contrary. Repentance renders men fit objects of mercy, when no other reason hinders; but the reasons of government may supersede the inclinations to show mercy. How often does a merciful prince hang a penitent malefactor without any blemish to the mercy of his government? And if good men and good princes are not always bound to forgive penitents, then repentance itself alone cannot entitle us to mercy.

So that we can have no security of the pardon of our sins, but by the gospel of Christ, wherein God has expressly promised the remission of sins to all true penitents, in the name, and through the merits and mediation of Christ.

What a consolation is this to sinners! Who would be without the certain hopes of forgiveness, for all the world! How terrible is it to believe that there is a just God, who will punish sinners, without knowing or believing a Saviour! Did these men duly consider things, they would think deism to be the most dangerous state in the world, which has no covenant, no promise, no priest, no sacrifice; which might be the religion of the state of innocence, but is no religion for sinners.

DR. W. SHERLOCK.

What is it that the world understands or means when it speaks of the mercy of God? or what may we infer that the opinion of the world on this subject is, from considering the way in which it acts?

That God is merciful no one ventures to doubt. Scripture positively declares that mercy is an attribute, a favorite attribute of the Deity; and the prolongation of our lives from day to day, the continuance of our existence, under the various circumstances of provocation and offence which it includes, brings the evidence of mercy home to every conscience. But beyond this present mercy, which the Scriptures call long-suffering, patience, forbearance; and which is designed to glorify the goodness of God in those that

are saved, and to justify his severity to those that perish; beyond this, which is the Scripture view of mercy, and the only mercy which we dare to contemplate in our Maker, the world presumes on a species of mercy which extends to another state of being, and which offers hopes of pardon differing from those which are included in the gospel. The world speaks of a mercy which not only offers the means of recovery, but which gives it; a mercy which not only is *long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*, 2 Peter iii. 9; but which including in itself all the riches of the grace of God, or rather confusing all his attributes in the exercise of one, forgives, from a feeling of compassion, without waiting for any satisfaction to the justice of God, or looking for any change in the nature of the sinner. The language and the system of the world, therefore, on this subject is, that God will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss; that the views which are given of his justice and his holiness are extravagant and unjust, if ever they appear inconsistent with the exercise of mercy and compassion; and that attribute of mercy, on which the soul naturally dwells with such complacency, is invested with a degree of superiority which raises it above all the other glories of our Maker's nature, and which, indeed, builds its elevation on their ruin and destruction.

The mercy of God under this representation, ceases to be that pure and holy quality which the believer contemplates with adoration in the process of man's conversion; which there suspends the judgment that was deserved, pleads with the thoughtless, and invites the penitent; but it becomes a feeling like that of natural affection or compassion; a feeling which shrinks from the sight of sorrow, and pronounces pardon in order to avoid the pain of punishing. It is described, not as acting in unison with the justice, the holiness, the goodness of God, but as contradicting or subverting all. It is not seen seeking the highest and most perfect good of man, by sanctifying and renewing his soul, but it is represented as sacrificing future holiness for the sake of peace; and as accomplishing man's salvation by a sort of sovereign act of grace, which dispenses with law, instead of making any provision for satisfying its rightful claims,

In this way, instead of raising our ideas of heaven, by the display of that love which opens and prepares our way to it, it degrades the gift by the facility with which it is bestowed, and lowers its value by the character of the persons to whom it is extended. Under such a view of the mercy of God, we are taught that the errors into which men fall through the influence of the flesh, the transgressions they commit in compliance with the usage of the world, the sins which do no harm to others, and exist only in the mind or the desires, need excite no serious alarm. The mercy of God is named with confidence, as the security for their pardon; and any application to other sources of hope, any reference to the mediation of Christ, any necessity for repentance or renewal of the soul, is spoken of as needless, and treated as derogatory to the fullness of peace derived from this single attribute of mercy.

Under this faith the world is avowedly living, and we see the result of this faith in the inconsistent lives they lead. We see Christians by name, who are destitute of all the distinguishing marks of Christianity. We see disciples of Jesus who, far from taking up their cross to follow him, count even his yoke an intolerable restraint, and live in habitual transgression of what they know to be their duty. We see men professing the faith of Christ, while they are trampling under foot his commandments, despising his ordinances, ridiculing the spirituality and holiness of his service, and disclaiming all the peculiar marks of the gospel. And we find these men meeting every reproof, and checking every misgiving of conscience, by referring to the mercy of God as the foundation of their hope; losing sight of every other attribute in short in contemplating this; and trusting themselves to this, without a thought or a question, as to the way in which it may be obtained, or the extent to which it may be carried. Nor can we deny that this is the prevailing system in the world. A loose indefinite notion of the mercy of God has superseded every other notion of his character, and bids fair to neutralise the whole efficacy of religious truth. Men do not, it is true, take the trouble now to attempt denying the existence of God, for that would be a painful task to indolence like ours; but they have adopted an easier

way of evading his authority by misrepresenting his nature. They confess that he exists, but not as he really is. They admit that he is just, and good, and holy, but not to the degree or extent to which the tenor of his word would guide us. They do not deny the authenticity of the Scriptures, but they lower the force of the Scripture record by their explanations. They are not atheists, but they are idolaters; and instead of fighting against the truth, as our forefathers did, with a stubborn resolution to show that they are in the right, they find it more convenient to pervert the truth in order to make it seem that they are not in the wrong. For this purpose they put out of sight all the pure essential attributes of God, the holiness by which he abhors sin; the truth and the justice by which he stands pledged to condemn it; and holding up the single attribute of mercy, detached and separate from the other constituent parts of the divine character, they give it a prominence which it never ought to have possessed in the symmetry of faith, and which it never would possess, when combined and viewed in harmony with the other attributes of God. . . . Under these representations the mercy of God becomes a universal refuge. Not, however, like that refuge which the penitent sinner beholds with joy in the gospel, and which was typified by the cities of refuge for the Israelites; but a refuge like those asylums of ancient times in which criminals of every description took shelter, and which offered indiscriminate security to all who fled within their precincts. At the same time that the quality is degraded by the characters of those who plead its application to themselves, its purity is sacrificed by accommodation to the practice of men. It is spoken of in terms which describe it as nearly resembling that easiness of temper in man, which passes by the little provocations of his equals in common life with indifference; or, as being akin to that natural tenderness, which seeks a relief for its own feelings by granting relief to others. God is deprived of his own appropriate glories in order to be invested with those which belong to man; and the work of idolatry is completed by a representation which assimilates the Creator to the creature in the exercise of his prerogative of mercy.

REV. H. RAIKES.

The free Fountain and Spring of all Grace and Mercy is in the bosom of the Father.

CHRISTIANS walk oftentimes with exceedingly troubled hearts, concerning the thoughts of the Father towards them; they are well persuaded of the Lord Christ, and his good-will: the difficulty lies in what is their acceptance with the Father, what is his heart towards them? *Show us the Father, and it shall suffice*, John xiv. 8. Now this ought to be so far away, that his love ought to be looked on as the fountain from which all other sweetness flow. Thus the apostle sets it out, *After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared*, Tit. iii. 4. It is of the Father of whom he speaks; for he tells us, ver. 6, that he *makes out unto us, or sheds that love upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour*. And this love he makes the hinge upon which the great alteration, and translation of the saints doth turn: for, saith he, ver. 3, *We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice, and envy, hateful, and hating one another*. All naught, all out of order, and vile. Whence then is our recovery? The whole rise of it is from this love of God, flowing out by the ways there described. For when the kindness and love of God appeared, that is, in the fruits of it, then did this alteration ensue. To secure us hereof, there is not any thing that hath a loving and tender nature in the world, and doth act suitably thereunto, which God hath not compared himself unto. Separate all weakness and imperfection which is in them, yet great impressions of love must abide. He is a father, a mother, a shepherd, a hen over chickens, and the like. Psal. ciii. 13. Isa. lxiii. 16. Matt. vi. 6. Isa. lxvi. 13. Psal. xxiii. 1. Isa. xl. 11. Matt. xxiii. 37. . . .

It is true, there is not an immediate acting of faith upon the Father, but by the Son. *He is the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by him*, John xiv. 6. *He is the merciful High Priest over the house of God, by whom we have access to the throne of grace*, Eph. ii. 18; by him is our manuduction unto the Father. *By him we believe in God*, 1 Pet. i. 21. But this is

that I say: When by and through Christ we have an access unto the Father, we then behold his glory also, and see his love that he peculiarly bears unto us, and act faithfully thereon. We are then, I say, to eye it, to believe it, to receive it as in him; the issues and fruits thereof being made out unto us through Christ alone. Though there be no light for us but in the beams, yet we may by beams see the sun, which is the fountain of it. Though all our refreshment actually lie in the streams, yet by them we are led up unto the fountain. Jesus Christ, in respect of the love of the Father, is but the beam, the stream, wherein though actually all our light, our refreshment lies, yet by him we are led to the fountain, the sun of eternal love itself. Would believers exercise themselves herein, they would find it a matter of no small spiritual improvement in their walking with God. This is that which is aimed at. Many dark and disturbed thoughts are apt to arise in this thing. Few can carry their hearts and minds to this height by faith, as to rest their souls in the love of the Father; they live below it, in the troublesome region of hopes and fears, storms and clouds. All here is serene and quiet. But how to attain to this pitch they know not. This is the will of God, that he may always be eyed as benign, kind, tender, loving, and unchangeable therein; and that peculiarly as the Father, as the great fountain and spring of all gracious communications and fruits of love. This is that which Christ came to reveal; God as a Father, John i. 18; that name which he declares to those who are given him out of the world, John xvii. 6. And this is that which he effectually leads us to by himself, as he is the only way of going to God, as a Father, John xiv. 5, 6, that is, as love; and by doing so, gives us the rest which he promiseth; for the love of the Father is the only rest of the soul. It is true, as was said, we do not this formally in the first instant of believing. We believe in God through Christ, 1 Pet. i. 21; faith seeks out rest for the soul. This is presented to it by Christ, the Mediator, as the only procuring cause. Here it abides not; but by Christ it hath access to the Father, Eph. ii. 18; into his love; finds out that he is love, as having a design, a purpose of love, a good pleasure towards us from eternity; a delight, a complacency, a good-will in Christ; all

cause of anger and aversion being taken away. The soul being thus by faith through Christ, and by him brought into the bosom of God, into a comfortable persuasion and spiritual perception and sense of his love, there reposes and rests itself. . . . It is exceeding acceptable unto God, even our Father, that we should thus hold communion with him in his love; that he may be received into our souls as one full of love, tenderness, and kindness, towards us. Flesh and blood is apt to have very hard thoughts of him; to think he is always angry, yea implacable: that it is not for poor creatures to draw nigh to him: that nothing in the world is more desirable than never to come into his presence, or, as they say, where he hath any thing to do. *Who among us shall dwell with that devouring fire? who among us shall inhabit with those everlasting burnings?* Isa. xxxiii. 41, say the sinners in Sion. *And I knew thou wast an austere man*, saith the evil servant in the gospel. Now there is not any thing more grievous to the Lord, nor more subservient to the design of Satan upon the soul, than such thoughts as these. Satan claps his hands (if I may so say) when he can take up the soul with such thoughts of God: he hath enough, all that he doth desire. This hath been his design and way from the beginning. *The first blood that murderer shed*, Gen. iii. 21, was by this means. He leads our first parents into hard thoughts of God; 'hath God said so? hath he threatened you with death? he knows well enough it will be better with you: with this engine did he batter and overthrow all mankind in one: and being mindful of his ancient conquest, he readily useth the same weapons wherewith then he so successfully contended. Now it is exceeding grievous to the Spirit of God to be so slandered in the hearts of those whom he dearly loves. How doth he expostulate this with Sion? *What iniquity have you seen in me*, saith he, Jer. v. 31, *have I been a wilderness unto you, or a land of darkness?* Isa. xl. 27-29. xlix. 15, 16. Sion hath said, *The Lord hath forgotten me, and my God hath forsaken me; but, can a mother, &c.* The Lord takes nothing worse at the hands of his, than such hard thoughts of him, knowing full well what fruit this bitter root is like to bear: what alienations of heart, what

drawings back, what unbelief, and tergiversations in our walking with him. How unwilling is a child to come into the presence of an angry father. Consider then this in the first place: receiving of the Father as he holds out love to the soul, gives him the honor he aims at, and is exceeding acceptable unto him. He often sets it out in an eminent manner that it may be so received. *He commends his love unto us*, Rom. v. 8. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us!* John iii. 1. Whence then is this folly? Men are afraid to have good thoughts of God. They think it a boldness to eye God as good, gracious, tender, kind, loving: I speak of saints; but for the other side, they can judge him hard, austere, severe, almost implacable, and fierce (the very worst affections of the very worst of men, and most hated of him, Rom. i. 31. Tim. iii. 3, and think herein they do well.

Is not this soul-deceit from Satan? Was it not his design from the beginning to inject such thoughts of God? Assure thyself then, there is nothing more acceptable unto the Father than for us to keep up our hearts unto him, as the eternal fountain of all that rich grace, which flows out to sinners in the blood of Jesus. Amen.

This will be exceeding effectual to endear thy soul unto God, to cause thee to delight in him, and to make thy abode with him. Many saints have no greater burden in their lives, than that their hearts do not come clearly and fully up constantly to delight and rejoice in God: that there is still an indisposedness of spirit unto close walking with him. What is at the bottom of this distemper? Is it not their unskilfulness in, or neglect of, this duty, even of holding communion with the Father in love? So much as we see of the love of God, so much shall we delight in him, and no more. Every other discovery of God without this will but make the soul fly from him. But if the heart be once much taken up with this, the eminency of the Father's love, it cannot choose but be overpowered, conquered, and endeared unto him. This, if any thing, will work upon us, to make our abode with him. If the love of a father will not make a child delight in him, what will? Put then this to the venture; exercise your thoughts upon this very thing, the eternal, free, and fruitful love of the Father, and see if your hearts,

be not wrought upon to delight in him. I dare boldly say, believers will find it as thriving a course, as ever they pitched on in their lives. Sit down a little at the fountain, and you will quickly have a farther discovery of the sweetness of the streams. You who have run from him, will not be able after awhile to keep at a distance for a moment.

DR. J. OWEN.

Christ saith, *I say not that I will pray for you* that God may save you, I who am about to die for you, *I say not that I will pray for you.* But though I speak this to insinuate in the highest manner, that I will; (for if I spend my blood for you, will I not spend my breath for you?) yet the truth is, that the case so stands, that but for God's own ordination, I need not do it, *for the Father himself loveth you*: that is, the Father of his own motion, and proper good-will towards you, and not wrought in him by me, doth love you, and beareth so much love to you, that he can deny you nothing, for he is your Father as well as mine. How much more then shall you be saved, when I shall join my intercession with yours, and use all my interest in him for you!

Christ useth this speech in order to correct the erroneous idea which harboureth in many of our hearts, who look upon God in the matter of salvation as one who is hardly entreated to save sinners; and we are apt to think that when he is induced to pardon, he doth it only at Christ's entreaty, and for his sake, having otherwise no innate motion in himself sufficient to incline his heart to it; but that it is in this transaction by Christ with him, as a favorite procures a pardon for a traitor, whose person the king cares not for; only at his favorite's suit and request he grants it, which else he would never have done. You are deceived, saith Christ, it is otherwise: my Father's heart is as much towards you, and for your salvation, as mine is. He of himself loveth you. And the

truth is, that God loved us of himself at first as much as ever he hath done since: and all that Christ doth for us is but the expression of that love which originally filled the Father's heart. Thus we find, that out of that love he gave Christ for us; so it is said *God, so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son to die, &c.* Yea, Christ's death was but a mean to commend or set forth that love of his unto us: so it was God also that did himself give our persons unto Christ, and set him on work to mediate for us: *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.* He only used Christ as his instrument to execute his own designs. All the blessings he means to give us he first purposed, and intended in himself, out of the good pleasure of his will, yet *in Christ* as the mean through which he would convey them: yea, Christ adds nothing to the love of God's heart, only he draws it out, and makes it flow forth, whose current had otherwise been stopped. The truth is, that God employed Christ to solicit mercy on our behalf for an honorable way of obtaining it, as also to make us prize this favor the more; so that his heart is as ready to give all to us, as Christ's is to ask, and this out of his pure love to us.

DR. GOODWIN.

God Unsearchable.

Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High; whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of his name; yet our soundest knowledge is, to know that we know him not as indeed he is, neither can know him; and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confess without confession that his glory is inexplicable, his greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above, and we upon earth; therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few.

HOOVER.

SECTION III.—OF GOD THE SON.

HIS PERSON, OFFICES, AND CHARACTER.

What think ye of Christ?

A QUESTION of greater importance was never proposed, in whatever light we con-

sider it, than that which was once asked by the adorable Redeemer himself, *What think ye of Christ?* . . .

In some, who call themselves Chris-

tians, the utmost ignorance prevails as to the Author and doctrine of Christianity. A spirit of carnal ease and sensual indulgence, with a total indifference as to heavenly truth, prevents all serious inquiry upon the subject. The treatment which the Redeemer meets with from such professors of his name is very similar to that predicted by the prophet: *He shall grow up like a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him.* We lament the literal fulfilment of this prediction in the conduct of the Jewish people, without reflecting how nearly our conduct corresponds with theirs. His name is 'called upon us' as Christians, but where are those amongst us who manifest that they are suitably influenced by their views of his excellency and glory? The attention given to his person, to his authority, and to his salvation, is more like that of persons who are speculating upon uncertainties, than of those who feel themselves everlastingly interested in them. If, however, the truths and discoveries of the gospel be of any value, they must, from their very nature, be of infinite and eternal moment. But men, when ignorant of the unchangeable holiness of the divine nature; the extent and spirituality of the law of God, and of the consequent evil of sin; the condemned and perishing state of every sinner as under the law; and the impossibility of his appearing with approbation in the sight of God, without the rich provision made in the covenant of redemption in Christ Jesus; little concern themselves as to the person, character, or blessings of the Redeemer. Ask them what they think of Christ, and it will be evident, as to many, that they have not yet thought sufficiently to know who or what he is, the work which he has performed, or the benefits we are taught to expect from him. In a Christian land, in the midst of those privileges and means which frequently solicit their attention to these things, the opportunities of information are neglected; and, through indolence or aversion, the ways of ignorance and error fatally preferred....

If, however, this criminal indifference be overcome; if the mind, influenced by the importance of religious truth, be attentive to its pursuit; how often is a system formed, independent of the word of

God, wherein moral duties and moral virtues are exalted into the place of Christ! His name is admitted into the plan, but it is an admission of mere civility, and not of cordial regard. For it is very observable, that the person and offices of the Son of God have no necessary connection with the religious system of many who call themselves Christians. Their system is complete without Christ; nor would it be at all deranged, if his name, offices, and salvation were totally omitted.

There are others, however, who think more highly of the Lord our Redeemer. They acknowledge him as the Saviour; are willing to be indebted to him for the supply of their deficiencies, and for rendering their own obedience acceptable and justifying. The error involved in these views arises from very inadequate conceptions of the state of man; the nature, extent, and demands of the law of God; the undertaking of the Saviour; and the mystery of redemption. This error also more easily deludes the mind, as, by including a partial admission of truth, it affords a more plausible appearance to falsehood. Discerning something of the fall, and consequent depravity of human nature, and desirous of escaping the wrath to come, such persons are willing to do much, in order to their acceptance before God; and, perceiving their inability to do all, they would, in some measure, trust in Christ to complete the work; but, not being convinced how totally guilty, ruined, and helpless is the situation of fallen man, they cannot be persuaded to look to Christ alone for justification and salvation, but seek to be their own saviours, through the merit of Christ. This is the general scheme and sad delusion of modern divinity. I say, the sad delusion; for, however gratifying to the pride of man, surely it needs but little consideration to see that this system is not founded on the testimony of God. It gives not that glory to Christ which he demands of us, but seeks to divide with him the honor of justification and salvation. It is in fact a rejection of the word of truth through the pride of an unbelieving heart. This alone it is which leads men into such unscriptural dependences, and from which so many different opinions are formed even upon the fundamental truths of the gospel. Hence also it is, that we are compelled to lament that there is nothing in

which men more differ than in those things where the Scriptures are the most plain and decisive. Some deny the divine glory of the Saviour ; some, his satisfaction to the divine law, and atonement for the sins of his people ; while to others, the freeness and fulness of his salvation are objects of a jealous fear. The necessity of the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, and his continued influences for the support of the Christian life and the Christian graces, are ridiculed by some who profess themselves Christians ; while others, from false views of the nature of the gospel, claim indulgence in the practice of sin, and abuse and dishonor the doctrines of grace. Thus, while the name of Christ receives the outward tokens of respect, how often is his person insulted and his work debased, and himself practically denied, either as the Saviour or as the Prince !

In the view of some, who call themselves Christians, the glorious Redeemer is acknowledged only in a part of his offices, as a Prophet and a Teacher sent from God, who hath illustrated his instructions by the most perfect example and pattern of virtue, and confirmed his doctrine and his precepts by his death. In the manner in which these represent him, he rises but little above the honor of Socrates, Plato, or Seneca, except in the

higher sublimity and excellency of his instructions. He does indeed teach us a morality of an higher order, suited to the majesty and holiness of God, and the true felicity and dignity of our nature ; a moral practice founded upon a principle of which the heathen were totally ignorant, the principle of the love of God ; a spiritual morality, arising from spiritual-mindedness, and a conduct guided by a *conversation in heaven*. But however eminently exalted the morality of the gospel, can this possibly be what the Scripture emphatically calls *the wisdom of God in a mystery ; even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory ; which none of the princes of this world knew ?* 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. *The unsearchable riches of Christ ? The mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God ?* Eph. iii. 8, 9. How vastly does such a system fall below what is implied in these expressions of admiration ; below the glories which are attributed to the Redeemer, and the benefits we are said to derive from him ! No ; the plan of the gospel is far beyond any system of morals, however transcendent in their excellency. It is *the wisdom and the power of God for the salvation of a sinner*, through the person and work of an Almighty Redeemer. REV. W. GOODE.

Divinity and Humanity of Christ.

THAT Christ is truly and essentially God, and also that he appeared in this world a man in the absolute and perfect sense, will be advantageously elucidated by a summary comparison of the representations made of him in both these characters.

As GOD it is said :

That he is God, the true God, the mighty God, the great God, Jehovah, I am, and Emmanuel, &c. That his goings forth were from of old, from everlasting ; that he was in the beginning set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was, &c. That he was in the beginning with God ; rejoicing always before him ; present, when he prepared the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth ; and possessed of glory with him before ever the world was. With reference to his greatness *as God* united to man, it is said, that Gabriel predicted his birth, an angel declared to the shepherds of Bethlehem that he was born, and a choir of the heavenly host sung together his natal hymn.

That he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

ANTH.

As MAN it is said :

That he was an infant, a child, a man, a carpenter, the son of Joseph and Mary, and the brother, or cousin-german, of James and Joses. That he was born in the reign of Herod the Great, and of the Roman emperor Augustus Cæsar. That he was born in Judea ; in Bethlehem, the city of David ; in the stable of an inn ; and was cradled in a manger. That he was refused a place in the inn, forgotten in the stable, and unfurnished even with the ordinary comforts provided for the children of peasants.

That he grew while a child really and perceptibly, in wisdom and stature, and

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As God it is said :

That all things are his ; that he upholds them by the word of his power ; and that they were made for him, and by him.

That he is Lord of all things, of angels, principalities, and powers ; and will subdue, and is able to subdue, all things unto himself, and put all opposition under his feet ; and that his throne and dominion are for ever and ever.

That he was originally rich in the possession of all things ; and the continual delight of his Father in the heavens ; where the angels unceasingly worshipped him.

That at the close of this world he will come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and with all his holy angels ; will summon the dead from their graves ; will gather all nations before the throne of his glory ; will judge both angels and men according to their works ; will punish the wicked with an everlasting destruction from the glory of his power ; will conduct the righteous into heaven ; and will cause them to live, and reign with him for ever and ever.

Finally, in his *divine character*, it is said, that he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God.

At the close of this wonderful career he was raised from the dead. He himself informs us, that *he laid down his own life voluntarily*, and that no one was *able to take it out of his hands*. He also informs us, that *he himself took it up again*. Accordingly, he rose from the grave on the third day, and after conversing familiarly with his disciples *concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, forty days, he ascended to heaven in a cloud of glory, attended by the heavenly host ; entered the world of glory in triumph, and *sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high* ; or as it is elsewhere expressed, *this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down for ever on the right hand of God*. At his name, henceforth, *every knee* is required to bow, of things in heaven, and things in

As MAN it is said :

in favor with God and man, and therefore changed day by day, and that through his life.

That he had not where to lay his head, and was sustained, without any property of his own, by the bounty of his disciples, and, at times, of others.

That he was subject to the Jewish and Roman governments, paid tribute, and performed all the usual duties of a child to his parents, and of a subject to his ruler ; and was exposed to the direct assaults and temptations of the devil.

That, for our sakes, he became poor, afflicted, despised, and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ; lightly esteemed, hated, and persecuted.

That he was betrayed by Judas ; seized by the Roman soldiers ; brought before the Sanhedrim ; judged, condemned to death ; again brought before Pilate, judged and condemned ; buffeted, crowned with thorns, mocked, spit upon, scourged, nailed to the cross, and carried to the tomb.

But that having emptied himself, and taken upon him the form of a servant, he was born in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

earth, and things under the earth ; and every tongue to confess, that he is the Lord, or sovereign of all things, to the glory of God the Father. The throne of infinite dominion is accordingly, and appropriately, styled *the throne of God and the Lamb*. Before this throne *the four living ones cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who wast, and who art, and who art to come*. *The four-and-twenty elders cast their crowns at his feet, and say, Thou art worthy, O Lord ! to receive glory, and honor, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created*. *And the multitude of angels round about the throne, and the living ones, and the elders, say with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and*

blessing: and every creature; which is in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, and in the sea, is heard, saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. To this divine ascription the four Living Ones subjoin their solemn Amen.

On this comparative view of the wonderful subject under consideration, I make the following remarks :

1. It is evident to the least consideration, that the things which are here said of Christ are exceedingly unlike each other.

So unlike are they that, if we suppose two beings to be the subjects of holiness, their characters cannot be more different from each other than the things are which are here declared concerning Christ.

Let any man attempt to describe two, the most distant characters, of two, the most distant holy beings, and he will find himself unable to place them farther asunder than these two characters of Christ are placed. Therefore,

2. These two characters cannot be given to any being possessed of a simple nature.

That they are all truly said will not be here called in question. If we suppose the person of whom they are said to be only God, we shall be obliged either to say, with the Sabellians, that Christ was no other than God manifesting himself in one particular form ; or, with the Patripassians, that the Father lived here, suffered, and died, as a man ; or, with the Docetæ, that Christ was God only ; that his appearance as a man was an illusion ; that he had a visionary body ; and suffered only in appearance and pretence ; while Judas Iscariot, or some other culprit, was crucified in his stead.

It is plainly impossible that the same simple being should be *set up from everlasting*, be the *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending* ; and yet *be born in Judea in the reign of Herod the Great* : be *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever* ; and yet *increase in wisdom, and in favor with God and man* :—*create all things visible and invisible* ; and yet *be made of a woman* : be the lawgiver to the universe ; and yet *be made under the law* :—*uphold all things by the word of his power* ; and yet be a petitioner for the daily supplies of his wants, and the protection of his person : possess all things, and yet *have not where to lay his head* :—*know all things* ; and

yet not know, as (if we adopt the common interpretation) we must suppose he did not know the time of the destruction of Jerusalem : be the final Judge and Rewarder of the quick and the dead ; and yet be tried, condemned, and executed by men : Be *in the form of God*, and justly *think it no robbery to be equal with God* ; and yet *be a servant*, a man, and a frail and dying man.

But all these things, and innumerable others, substantially of the same nature in both respects are declared concerning Christ. All also are declared by God himself. They are therefore true, and true in the natural, obvious sense. Of course they are *worthy of all acceptance*.

It follows then that Christ is, notwithstanding the sneers of Unitarians, God and man. In the language of the Scriptures, *the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us*. Yet, humble as were the station and circumstances in which he appeared, *we are able still to behold his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father*.
DR. DWIGHT.

Only this we may safely say, and must firmly hold ; that as the distinction of the persons in the Holy Trinity hindereth not the unity of the nature of the Godhead, although every person entirely holdeth his own incommunicable property ; so neither doth the distinction of the two natures in our Mediator any way cross the unity of his person, although each nature remaineth entire in itself, and retaineth the properties agreeing thereunto, without any conversion, composition, commixion, or confusion.

When Moses beheld the bush burning with fire, and yet no whit consumed, he wondered at the sight, and said, *I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt*, Exod. iii. 2, 3, 5, 6. Acts vii. 31, 32. But when God thereupon called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, *Draw not nigh hither*, and told him who he was, Moses trembled, hid his face, and durst not behold God. Yet although being thus warned, we dare not draw so nigh ; what doth hinder but we may stand aloof of, and wonder at this great sight ? *Our God is a consuming fire*, saith the apostle : Heb. xii. 29 ; and a question we find propounded in the prophet, *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire ?*

who among us shall dwell with the everlasting burnings? Isa. xxxiii. 14. Moses was not like other prophets; but *God spake unto him face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend*, Num. xii. 6, 7, 8, Exod. xxxiii. 11; and yet for all that, when he besought the Lord that he would show him his glory, he received his answer, *Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live*, Exod. xxxiii. 19, 20. Abraham before him, though a special friend of God, Isa. xli. 8, and the father of the faithful, Rom. iv. 11. 16. Gal. iii. 7, the children of God, yet held it a great matter that he should take upon him so much as to *speak unto God, being but dust and ashes*, Gen. xviii. 27. Yea, the very angels themselves (which are greater in power and might), 2 Pet. ii. 11, *are fain to cover their faces when they stand before him, as not being able to behold the brightness of his glory*, Isa. vi. 2.

With what astonishment then may we behold our dust and ashes assumed into the undivided unity of God's own person; and admitted to dwell here as an inmate under the same roof? and yet in the midst of those everlasting burnings, the bush to remain unconsumed, and to continue fresh and green for evermore. Yea, how should not we with Abraham rejoice to see this day, wherein not only our nature in the person of our Lord Jesus is found to dwell for ever in those everlasting burnings; but, in and by him, our own persons also are brought so nigh thereunto, that *God doth set his sanctuary and tabernacle among us, and dwell with us*, Lev. xxvi. 11, 12, Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27, Rev. xxi. 3, and (which is much more) maketh us ourselves to be the house and the habitation wherein he is pleased to dwell by his Spirit, Heb. iii. 6, Eph. ii. 22; according to that of the apostle, *Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said; I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people*, 2 Cor. vi. 16; and that most admirable prayer, which our Saviour himself made unto his Father in our behalf: *I pray not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast*

sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me, John xvii. 20, 21, 22, 23.

ABP. USHER.

Jesus was pleased to be born of a poor mother in a poor place, in a cold winter's night, far from home, amongst strangers, with all the circumstances of humility and poverty; and no man will have cause to complain of his coarse robe, if he remembers the swaddling clothes of this holy child: nor to be disquieted at his hard bed when he considers Jesus laid in a manger; nor to be discontented at his thin table, when he calls to mind the King of heaven and earth was fed with a little breast milk. . . .

The condition of the person who was born is here of greatest consideration. For he that cried in the manger, that sucked the paps of a woman, that hath exposed himself to poverty and a world of inconveniences, is the Son of the living God; of the same substance with his Father, begotten before all ages, before the morning stars; he is God eternal. He is also by reason of the personal union of the Divinity with his human nature, the Son of God, not by adoption, as good men, and beatified angels are; but by an extraordinary and miraculous generation. He is the heir of his Father's glories and possessions, not by succession, (for his Father cannot die,) but by an equality of communication. He is the express image of his Father's person according to both natures; the miracle and excess of his Godhead being, as upon wax, imprinted upon all the capacities of his humanity. And after all this he is our Saviour; that to our duties of wonder and adoration, we may add the affections of love and union, as himself, besides his being admirable in himself, is become profitable to us.

Here then are concentrated the prodigies of greatness and goodness, of wisdom and charity, of meekness and humility; and march all the way in mystery and incomprehensible mixtures, if we consider him in the bosom of his Father, where he is seated by the postures of love and essential felicity, and in the manger where love also placed him, and an infinite desire to communicate his felicities to us. As he is God, his throne is in heaven, and he fills all things by his immensity: as he is Man, he is circumscribed by an uneasy cradle, and cries in a stable. As he is God, he is

seated upon a super-exalted throne; as Man, exposed to the lowest estate of uneasiness and need. As God, clothed in a robe of glory at the same instant when you may behold and wonder at his humanity, wrapped in cheap and unworthy cradle-bands. As God, he is encircled with millions of angels; as Man, in the company of beasts: as God, he is the eternal Word of the Father, eternal, sustained by himself, all-sufficient and without need; and yet he submitted himself to a condition imperfect, inglorious, indigent, and necessitous: and this consideration is apt and natural to produce great affections of love, duty, and obedience, desires of union and conformity to his sacred person, life, actions, and laws; that we resolve all our thoughts, and finally determine all our reason, and our passions, and capacities upon that saying of St. Paul, *He that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed*, 1 Cor. xvi. 20.

Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he, St. John xviii. 4.

JESUS himself begins the inquiry, and leads them into their errand, and tells them that he was Jesus of Nazareth whom they sought. But this also, which was an answer so gentle, had in it a strength greater than the eastern wind, or the voice of thunder; for God was in that still voice, and it struck them down to the ground. And yet they, and so do we still persist to persecute our Lord, and to provoke the eternal God, who can with the breath of his mouth, with a word or a sign, or a thought, reduce us into nothing, or into a worse condition, even an eternal duration of torments, and cohabitation with a never ending misery. And if we cannot bear a soft answer of the merciful God, how shall we dare to provoke the wrath of the Almighty Judge? But in this instance there was a rare mixture of effects, as there was in Christ of natures; the voice of a man, and the power of God. For it is observed by the doctors of the primitive ages, that from the nativity of our Lord to the day of his death, the divinity and humanity did so communicate in effects, that no great action passed, but it was like the sun shining through a cloud, or a beauty with a thin veil drawn

over it; they gave illustration and testimony to each other. The holy Jesus was born a tender and a crying infant, but is adored by the magi as a king; by the angels as their God. He is circumcised as a man, but a name is given him to signify him to be the Saviour of the world. He is presented in the temple as the Son of man, but by Simeon and Anna he is celebrated with divine praises for the Messiah, the Son of God. He is baptised in Jordan as a sinner, but the Holy Ghost descending upon him proclaimed him to be the well-beloved of God. He is hungry in the desert as a man, but sustained his body without meat and drink for forty days together by the power of his divinity: there he is tempted of Satan as a weak man, and the angels of light minister unto him as their supreme Lord. And now a little before his death, when he was to take upon him all the affronts, miseries and exinanitions of the most miserable, he receives testimonies from above, which are most wonderful: for he was transfigured on Mount Tabor, entered triumphantly into Jerusalem, had the acclamations of the people; when he was dying he darkened the sun; when he was dead he opened the sepulchres; when he was fast nailed to the cross he made the earth to tremble; now when he suffers himself to be apprehended by a guard of soldiers, he strikes them all to the ground only by replying to their answer, that the words of the prophet might be verified, *Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold it is I*. BP. TAYLOR.

Necessity for Christ being God and Man.

THE Godhead is of that infinite perfection, that it cannot possibly be subject to any passion. He therefore that had no other nature but the Godhead, could not pay such a debt as this; the discharge whereof consisted in suffering and dying. It was also fit that God's justice should have been satisfied in that nature which had transgressed; and that the same nature should suffer the punishment that had committed the offence. *Forasmuch, then, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all*

their lifetime subject to bondage. Such and so great was the love of God the Father towards us, that *he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*; and so transcendent was the love of the Son of God towards the sons of men, that he desired not to be spared; but rather than they should lie under the power of death, was of himself most willing to suffer death for them: which seeing in that infinite nature, which by eternal generation he received from his Father, he could not do; he resolved in the appointed time to take unto himself a mother, and out of her substance to have a body framed unto himself, wherein he might *become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, for our redemption. And therefore when he cometh into the world, he saith unto his Father, *A body hast thou fitted me; Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.* By the which will, saith the apostle, *we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

Thus we see it was necessary for the satisfaction of this debt, that our Mediator should be man; but he that had no more in him than a man could never be able to go through with so great a work. For if there should be found a man as righteous as Adam was at his first creation, who would be content to suffer for the offence of others, his suffering possibly might serve for the redemption of one soul; it would be not sufficient ransom for those innumerable multitudes that were to be *redeemed to God out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation.* Neither could any man or angel be able to hold out, if a punishment equivalent to the endless sufferings of all the sinners in the world should at once be laid upon him. Yea, the very powers of Christ himself, upon whom *the Spirit of might did rest*, were so shaken in the sharp encounter, that he, who was the most accomplished pattern of all fortitude, stood *sore amazed*, and with *a strong crying and tears* prayed that, *if it were possible the hour might pass from him.*

This man therefore being to offer one sacrifice for sins for ever; to the burning of that sacrifice he must not only bring the coals of his love as strong as death, and as ardent as the fire which bath a most vehement flame, but he must add thereunto those everlasting burnings also, even the flames of his most glorious Deity:

and therefore *through the eternal Spirit* must he *offer himself without spot unto God*; that thereby he might obtain for us an *eternal redemption.* The blood whereby the church is purchased must be *God's own blood*: and to that end must *the Lord of glory be crucified; the Prince and Author of life be killed*; he whose eternal *generation no man can declare, be cut off out of the land of the living*; and the *man* that is God's own fellow be thus *smitten*; according to that which God himself foretold by his prophet: *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* The people of Israel, we read, did so value the life of David their king, that they counted him to be worth *ten thousand* of themselves: how shall we then value the life of *David's Lord*, who is *the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords*? It was indeed our nature that suffered, but he that suffered in that nature *is over all, God blessed for ever*: and for such a person to have suffered but one hour, was more than if all other persons had suffered ten thousand millions of years.

But put the case also, that the life of any other singular man might be equivalent to all the lives of whole mankind; yet the laying down of that life would not be sufficient to do the deed, unless he that had power to lay it down had power likewise to take it up again. For, to be detained always in that *prison, from whence there is no coming out before the payment of the uttermost farthing*, is to lie always under execution, and to quit the plea that full payment of the debt wherein our surety stood engaged for us. And therefore the apostle upon that ground doth rightly conclude, that *if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins*: and consequently, that as he must be *delivered to death for our offences*, so he must be *raised again for our justification.*

Yea, our Saviour himself knowing full well what he was to undergo for our sakes, told us beforehand, that the *Comforter* whom he would send unto us should *convince the world*, that is, fully satisfy the consciences of the sons of men, concerning that everlasting *righteousness*, which was to be brought in by him, upon this

very ground: *Because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more . . .* And this is the evidence we have to show of that *righteousness*, whereby we stand justified in God's sight: according to the apostle, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

Now although an ordinary man may easily part with his life; yet doth it not lie in his power to resume it again at his will and pleasure. But he that must do the turn for us, must be able to say as our Jesus did: *I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.* And in another place: *Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up,* saith he unto the Jews, *speaking of the Temple of his body.* A human nature then he must have had, which might be subject to dissolution: but being once dissolved, he could not by his own strength (which was the thing here necessarily required) raise it up again; unless he had *declared himself to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.* The *Manhood* could suffer, but not overcome the sharpness of death: the *Godhead* could suffer nothing, but overcome any thing. He therefore that was to suffer and to overcome death for us must be partaker of both natures: that *being put to death in the flesh*, he might be able also to *quicken himself by his own Spirit.* ABP. USHER.

When I say the Son of God became the Son of man, I do not mean as if by this he should cease to be what he was before, the Son of God; for he did not leave his Godhead to take upon him the manhood; but I believe he took the manhood into his Godhead; he did not put off the one to put on the other, but he put one upon the other. Neither do I believe that the human nature, when assumed into the divine, ceased to be human; but as the divine person so assumed the human nature as still to remain a divine person, so the human nature was so assumed into a divine person as still to remain a human nature. God therefore so became man, as to be both perfectly God and perfectly

man, united together in one person. I say, in one person; for if he should be God and man in distinct persons, this would avail me no more than if he should be God only and not man, or man only and not God; because the merit and value both of his active and passive obedience is grounded merely upon the union of the two natures in one and the same person. He, therefore, by his life and death merited so much for us, because the same person that so lived and died was God as well as man; and every action that he did, and every passion that he suffered, was done and suffered by him that was God as well as man. And hence it is that Christ, of all the persons in the world, is so fit, yea, only fit, to be my Redeemer, Mediator, and Surety, because he alone is both God and man in one person. If he was not man, he could not undertake that office; if he was not God, he could not perform it. If he was not man, he could not be capable of being bound for me; if he was not God, he would not be able to pay my debt. It was man by whom the covenant was broken, and therefore man must have suitable punishment laid upon him: it was God with whom it was broken, and therefore God must have sufficient satisfaction made unto him: and as for that satisfaction, it was man that had offended, and therefore man alone could make it suitable; it was God that was offended, and therefore God alone could make it sufficient.

The sum of all is this; man can suffer, but he cannot satisfy; God can satisfy, but he cannot suffer; but Christ, being both God and man, can both suffer and satisfy too; and so is perfectly fit both to suffer for man and to make satisfaction unto God, to reconcile God to man, and man to God. And thus, Christ having assumed my nature into his person, and so satisfied Divine justice for my sins, I am received into grace and favor again with the Most High God. BP. BEVERIDGE.

As indispensably necessary as it is to the assurance of our salvation, to know that Jesus Christ is over all, God blessed for ever; so needful is it likewise to our salvation, to know that Jesus Christ is very man, subject to the same infirmities as we are, sin only excepted. *He was tempted*, that none might say, This Sa-

viour, who is given unto us, is too far removed from us; he is inaccessible; his quality and condition is too far above us, that we should be able to approach him. In order to prevent any such idea, he descended into the lower parts of the earth, that we might not think him above our reach. Nor is he far off, being united to us by the most intimate bands of consanguinity. He dwelleth in our hearts by faith: there we experience him as our Brother, in all points tempted like as we are, and subject to the same infirmities, that he might sanctify ours, and change their nature. He needed not to be tempted on his own account; but it was necessary on ours, that we, as his members, might under all our temptations have part in his victory.

After forty days, he was an hungred: a plain proof of his being a true man. It is said of him, that he was thirsty, and was wearied with travelling; in a word, that he felt all the distresses of our nature. We ought not to pass lightly over such passages of holy writ, which are recorded as proofs of the real humanity of the Son of God; for we are not less concerned to know that Jesus Christ is very man, than we are to be assured that he is the true God. A true believer, reading with attention, that Jesus Christ was an hungred, will certainly perceive the enormity of sin, on the one hand, and the infinite mercy of God on the other; for what, but our sins, made him suffer hunger or thirst? Him, upon whom all creatures wait, that he may give them meat in due season, and thus fill them with good! He, the Source of life, from whom flow the streams of all blessing, has thirsted, that he might allay our thirst with streams of grace, and that the water he gives to us may become in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life. In this sense, the hunger of Jesus Christ proves to us more than an exquisite repast, to refresh and comfort our needy souls. DURAND.

The Importance of this Doctrine.

IF it be indeed a truth that Jesus Christ is *God over all*, it is utterly impossible that it can be a truth of subordinate magnitude. The simple statement of it is enough to show that it must rank as a first principle;—an article of prime importance; a foundation-stone in the Temple of Truth: a star of the very first

magnitude in the hemisphere of Christian doctrine.—For my own part, I believe it to be even more than this; a kind of central Sun, around which the whole system of Christianity, in all its glory, and in all its harmony, revolves.

This view of its importance is confirmed, when we consider it, secondly, in its connexion with our most interesting and solemn duties: I mean the duties which we owe to the great object of supreme reverence, worship, and obedience.—If Jesus Christ be not God, then we, who offer to him that homage of our hearts which is due to God alone, are, without doubt, guilty of idolatry; as really guilty as the worshippers of the deified heroes of Greece or Rome. We are guilty, like them, of *changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man*; of thus alienating the honors of him who hath declared, that he *will not give his glory to another*. This, surely, is no trifle.—But is it, on the other hand, a trifle,—is it fitted to excite no serious concern, no uneasy apprehension—to withhold divine honor from one to whom it is due? to divest of his supreme dignity, and to equalise with ourselves, puny worms of the dust, one whom angels and archangels adore, as *over all, God blessed for ever*?—Consequences of such magnitude, on both sides, certainly stamp with immense importance the inquiry on which we are now entering.

The same thing is manifest, thirdly, from the intimate relation which this doctrine bears to others.—It is an integral part of a system of truths, which stand or fall along with it. It is connected, for example, in the closest manner, with the purpose of Christ's appearance upon earth, and the great design of his sufferings and death; that is, with the vitally important doctrine of atonement:—this doctrine, again, is inseparably connected with the corruption of human nature, and the universal guilt of mankind; from which it is that the necessity of such atonement arises:—and this, in its turn, essentially affects the question respecting the true ground of a sinner's acceptance with God; the necessity of the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit; the principle and motive of all acceptable obedience; and other points of similar consequence. It is very obvious, that two systems, of which the sen-

timents, on subjects such as these, are in direct opposition, cannot, with any propriety, be confounded together under one common name. That both should be Christianity, is impossible; else Christianity is a term which distinguishes nothing. Viewing the matter abstractly, and without affirming, for the present, what is truth and what is error, this, I think, I may with confidence affirm, that to call schemes so opposite in all their leading articles by a common appellation, is more absurd, than it would be to confound together those two irreconcilable theories of astronomy, of which the one places the earth, and the other the sun, in the centre of the planetary system.—They are, in truth, essentially different religions. For if opposite views as to the object of worship, the ground of hope for eternity, the rule of faith and duty, and the principles and motives of true obedience;—if opposite views as to these do not constitute different religions, we may, without much difficulty, discover some principle of union and identity amongst all religions whatever; we may realise the doctrine of Pope's Universal Prayer; and extend the right hand of fellowship to the worshippers at the Mosque, and to the votaries of Brama.

Such, then, is the importance, direct and relative, of this point of doctrine,—that Jesus Christ is truly God; that in his Person there subsisted, when he was on earth, an union of the divine and human nature.

REV. DR. WARDLAW.

Mediation of Christ.

WHEN we behold the camp of Israel in the wilderness, visited by the divine judgments; when we see some going down alive into the dreadful pit; others burnt up in a moment by fire from heaven; and a pestilence threatening to consume the rest; when we look around, and view, in every part of the picture, the dying and the dead; do we not at once acknowledge the original from which it is drawn, and discern in it the too, too faithful portrait of a fallen world, full of misery and death, because full of sin and rebellion!

But what? Must we then indeed perish? Must we all perish? *Will the Lord cast off for ever; and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gra-*

cious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Is the plague begun among the people, and is there no person who can stay it? O not so; blessed be our gracious God! there is yet hope of comfort, health, and salvation. Turn your eyes once more to the instructive picture, and there view the Intercessor making atonement, and saving the remnant of his people. Destruction was not the end for which God formed man. 'For God made not death. He created man to be immortal, and made him an image of his own eternity. Through envy of the devil came death into the world, and still, as at the first, they alone who hold of his side do find it.' The covenant of works being broken by transgression, the covenant of grace immediately succeeded in its room. This was the remedy provided against sin and death, and the blessed means of reconciliation fore-ordained by the divine Persons, before the foundation of the world; that the sinner, who had no righteousness of his own to plead in arrest of judgment upon the new terms of this act of grace, might again find acceptance and life, through the divine satisfaction and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was consecrated to be our High Priest, and ordained to perform an office, in attempting which every high priest taken from among men must else have failed. He had no need to offer sacrifice for his own sins, since he had none; but being himself all-righteous, was perfectly qualified to save others. Nor was his priesthood to pass from one to another, or to have an end, like that of Aaron; but it was eternal and unchangeable, as the Son of God who exercised it. Such was our High Priest, who perceived that, on account of man's transgression, wrath was gone forth from the presence of the Lord, and that the plague was begun among the people. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore he arrayed himself in the holy garments of glory and beauty; he put on a breast-plate of righteousness, and a robe of inviolable sanctity, and he was clad, over all, with zeal as a cloke. He was anointed with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost, and with power; and on his head was a crown of salvation and glory. Thus adorned and fitted for the work, he put on, for incense, the merits of his sufferings. He ran into the

midst of God's people, as a mediator, interposing himself between the parties at variance, in order to reconcile them. He met the burning wrath, and turned it aside from all believers. He stood, and stands now, between the dead and the living, between those who, by opposing his method of salvation, will die in their sins, and those who, living and believing in him, shall never die eternally. He is at the right hand of God, ever making intercession for us. And so the plague is stayed. A stop is put to the progress of everlasting destruction. The fiery sword of offended justice cannot reach, nor shall the second death have any power over such as accept the atonement which he hath made for them, and thankfully receive the benefits of his all-prevailing intercession. *There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*

And can any thing, then, prevent our accepting this atonement, and thankfully receiving the benefits of this intercession? Can any thing induce us, when the bountiful hand of mercy hath filled and holdeth out the cup of salvation, to dash it untasted from us? Nothing can, but an utter ignorance of our sin and of our danger. Could a dying Israelite have been prevailed upon, think you, to reject the atonement and intercession of Aaron? No, surely. Only see how hope revives in their countenances, and joy sparkles in their eyes, all turned and fixed upon him in the execution of his priestly office. And why? Because they were sensible of their wretched and perilous estate. They needed not to be told, that they were expiring by the pestilence. They knew it, they felt it; they were looking wishfully around them for help and deliverance, ready with eagerness and impatience, with gratitude and thankfulness, to snatch at it, and embrace it, the moment it should appear. O why are not we so? Why do we hear of the atonement and intercession of the holy Jesus with so much cold indifference? Why, but because we see not, we know not, we feel not, the want of them? And yet what is there within us or without us that doth not teach and show it us? To tell you that the world is full of sorrow is no news; to tell you that the world is full of sin, is, I presume, no news. And from what would you desire to be delivered, if not from sin and sorrow? To tell you that a sentence of death is passed upon the bo-

dies of men, and that, without redemption, a sentence of condemnation will be passed upon their souls and bodies too, this likewise is no news to any one of you. Daily experience proves the first, and the Scripture asserts the second. And from what would you wish to be saved, if not from death and condemnation? Or what, in point of wretchedness and horror, was the camp of Israel with the pestilence in the midst of it, if compared to such a world as this? Go, thou who art tempted to reject, or to neglect, the satisfaction of Christ, go to the bed of sickness, and undraw the curtains of affliction; ask him who lies racked with pain, and trembling at the thoughts of the wrath to come, what his opinion is concerning the doctrine of atonement; and observe how the name of a Saviour and Intercessor puts comfort and gladness into his sorrowful and affrighted soul, at a time when the treasures and the crowns of eastern kings would be utterly contemned, as equally vain, worthless, and unprofitable, with the dust of the earth. Then reflect, that such, one day, must be thy state; and in that state, such infallibly will be thy thoughts and sensations. And did the cares and pleasures of the world suffer living men to think and feel as dying men do, the intercession of Christ would be regarded and accepted by Christians, as that of Aaron once was by Israel. Now, indeed, the sentiments of men on this great point may be different, because their passions and their prejudices are different: but we shall all think alike upon the subject, when passion shall cease, and prejudice be no more, at the hour of death, and in the Day of Judgment. In that last and concerning Day, the scene on which we have been meditating shall be again exhibited, in its most awful and tremendous accomplishment. Instead of the earthly pit opening its mouth to swallow up Korah and his company, the infernal pit of everlasting destruction shall disclose its bottomless depth, to receive alive into it the great adversary, and all that have taken part with him against God and Christ. Instead of fire from the presence of the Lord, to consume the two hundred and fifty that offered incense, *Behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, and leave them neither*

root nor branch. Instead of the pestilence to destroy fourteen thousand only of his murmuring people, the inexhaustible floods of almighty vengeance, heaped up for ages, shall be poured out, to drown rebellious spirits in irresistible perdition. Then, when the heavens shall melt with fervent heat all around, the fiery gulf rolling beneath, and the earth, upon which we stand, sinking down into the flames, then what a sight will it be, to behold our blessed Aaron, our great Mediator, standing up, and interposing his merits between the dead and the living; between those who, disbelieving, have murmured against him, and those who, believing, have served and obeyed him. Then tremble, thou wretch, who hast blasphemed, or slighted the intercession of Jesus. But rejoice greatly, O faithful soul, whose trust hath ever been in him; thy salvation is sure, and the day of thy redemption is come: rejoice, and shout aloud for joy; join the chorus of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, whom the well-beloved John heard, saying, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.* And with them let *every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,* exalt their voices, and proclaim, *Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.*

BP. HORNE.

Necessity for the Mediation of Christ.

WHATEVER notions we may entertain of God and salvation, in the days of ease and health; or however we may pass away our lives in indulgence, or philosophical security, there comes a period when every man capable of reflection is made serious. The most inconsiderate, when the world fails them, when, from the recollection of their past lives, they feel they stand in need of some security from the consequences they have brought upon themselves, and of which they become apprehensive; they then are glad, in most instances, to lay hold of the idea of redemption, and feel the hopes of Christ's atonement very congenial to their sinking spirits, in the proportion that they

perceive that they can have no other ground for the expectation of pardon. It would be well if they would look out of, and beyond themselves for help, before the arrival of the trying decisive hour. It is not sending for the sacrament to be administered, or crying, Lord, Lord, at the last, that will insure to us an open door of mercy; but we may judge what our feelings will then be, by the solicitude which all express (who have any reason or conscience) at the approach of death. Who is the man that feels himself in a state in his own person, to come before God, with confidence? Does he feel no guilt, no fear, no misgivings?

On this subject I would appeal to the testimony left us by a most distinguished modern philosopher;* one who possessed great knowledge of the human heart, but unhappily was too little favorable to Christianity: yet viewing the approach of the close of life, he records feelings to which every heart must respond. In the third edition of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, second part, the author describes the real feelings of reflecting human nature. It will be recollected that he passed his life among philosophical unbelievers, and evidenced no disapprobation of their opinions: his judgment may, on that account, have the more weight in the argument. He says, "If we consult our natural sentiments (on the subjects of virtue and vice) we are even apt to fear, lest, before the holiness of God, vice should appear more worthy of punishment, than the weakness and imperfection of human virtue can ever seem to be of reward. Man, when about to appear before a Being of infinite perfection, can feel but little confidence in his own merit, or in the imperfect propriety of his own conduct. In the presence of his fellow creatures he may (even justly) elevate himself, and may often have reason to think highly of his own character and conduct, compared with the still greater imperfection of theirs: but the case is quite different, when about to appear before his infinite Creator. To such a Being, he fears that his littleness and weakness can scarce ever appear the proper object, either of esteem or reward; but he can easily conceive how the numberless violations of duty, of which he has been guilty, should

* Dr. Adam Smith.

render him the proper object of aversion and punishment; and he thinks he can see no reason why the divine indignation should not be let loose, without any restraint upon so vile an insect as he imagines himself to appear to be. If he should still hope for happiness, he suspects that he cannot demand it from the justice, but that he must intreat it from the mercy of God. Repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition, at the thought of his past conduct, seem upon this account, the sentiments which become him, and to be the only means which he has left of appeasing that wrath which he knows he has justly provoked. He even distrusts the efficacy of all these, and naturally fears, lest the wisdom of God should not, like the weakness of man, be prevailed upon to spare the crime by the most importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other intercession, some other sacrifice, some other atonement he imagines must be made for him, beyond what he himself is capable of making, before the purity of Divine justice can be reconciled to his manifold offences. The doctrines of revelation coincide in every respect with these original anticipations of nature: and as they teach us how little we can depend upon the imperfection of our own virtue, so they shew us at the same time, that the most powerful intercession has been made, and that the most prevailing atonement has been paid, for our manifold transgressions and iniquities."

REV. DAVID BROWN.

Christ as Mediator must be perfectly Holy.

HE that interposed as Mediator, must be perfectly holy; otherwise he had been liable to justice for his own sin; and guilty blood is impure and corrupt, apter to stain by its effusion and sprinkling, than to purge away sin. The apostle joins these two as inseparable; *He was manifested to take away our sin, and in him is no sin*, 1 John iii. 5. The priesthood under the law was imperfect, as for other reasons, so for the sins of the priests; Aaron, the first and chief of the Levitical order, was guilty of gross idolatry; so that reconciliation could not be obtained by their ministry: for how can one captive ransom another, or sin expiate sin? But our Mediator was absolutely innocent, without the least tincture of sin original or actual. He was conceived in a miracu-

lous manner, infinitely distant from all the impurities of the earth. That which is produced in an ordinary way, receives its propriety from second causes, and contracts the defilement that cleaves to the whole species. Whatever is born *of blood* and *of the will of the flesh*, that is formed of the substance of the flesh and by the sensual appetite, is defiled: but though he was formed of the substance of the virgin, yet it was by virtue of a heavenly principle, according to the words of the angel to her. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God*, Luke i. 35. He came in the appearance only *of sinful flesh*; as the brazen serpent had the figure, and not the poison, of the fiery serpent. He was without actual sin. He foiled the tempter in all his arts and methods wherewith he tried him. He resisted the lust of the flesh, by refusing to make the stones bread to assuage his hunger; and the lust of the eyes, in despising the kingdoms of the world with all their treasures; and the pride of life, when he would not throw himself down, that by the interposing of angels for his rescue, there might be a visible proof that he was the Son of God. The accuser himself confessed him to be the *Holy One of God*; he found no corruption within him, and could draw nothing out of him. Judas that betrayed him, and Pilate that condemned him, acknowledged his innocence. He perfectly fulfilled the law, and did always what pleased his Father. In the midst of his sufferings, no irregular motion disturbed his soul, but he always expressed the highest reverence to God and unspeakable charity to men. He was compared, for his passion and his patience, to a lamb, that quietly dies at the foot of the altar.

Besides, we may consider in our Mediator not only a perfect freedom from sin, but an impossibility that he should be touched by it. The angelical nature was liable to folly; but the human nature, by its intimate and unchangeable union with the divine, is established above all possibility of falling. The Deity is holiness itself, and, by its personal presence, is a greater preservative from sin, than either the vision of God in heaven, or the most permanent habit of grace. Our Saviour

tells us, *the Son can do nothing of himself, but according to the pattern the Father sets him*, John v. 19.

Now the perfect holiness of our Redeemer hath a special efficacy in making his death to be the expiation of sin, as the Scripture frequently declares; *For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*, Heb. vii. 26. *And he that knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. *We are redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot*, 1 Pet. i. 18. *And By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many*, Isa. liii. 11.

DR. BATES.

Christ as Man perfectly Holy.

THE obedience of Christ was of all other the most *free* and *voluntary* service of his Father, if we consider it with respect unto his own most holy, and therefore most undistracted and unhindered will; for, if it were not voluntary, it were no obedience. And yet, notwithstanding, it was most *certain* and *infallible*, if we consider it with respect to the sanctity of his nature, to the unmeasurableness of his unction, to the plenitude of his unseducible and unerring spirit, to the mystery of his hypostatical union, and the communication of properties between his natures, whereby whatever action was done by him might justly be called the action of God,—in which regard it was *impossible* for him to sin. In like manner, the passive obedience of Christ was most *free* and *voluntary*, as it respected his own will; for he troubled himself, he humbled and emptied himself, he laid down his own life, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: and yet, thus it was written, and thus it behoved (or was *necessary* for) Christ to suffer, if we consider the pre-terminate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, who had so ordained, Acts iv. 28.

BP. REYNOLDS.

Natural Religion judging between Christ and Mahomet.

LET us consider briefly, what alteration has happened since the coming of Christ, to disturb and unsettle our judgments in this great affair. A man, perhaps, who is a great reader, may be able to produce

many instances of impostors since that time, and imagine that they are all so many dead weights upon the cause of revelation. But what is become of them, and their doctrine? they are vanished, and their place is not to be found. What pretence is there then to set up these revelations? Is God grown so weak and impotent, that we may suppose these to be his revelations, and intended for the use of the world, had he not been baffled at first setting out? If God intends a law for the use of the world, he is obliged, if I may use the expression, to publish the law to the world; and therefore want of such publication evidently shews that God was not concerned in them; or at least did not intend that we should be concerned in them: and therefore it is absurd to instance such pretences as difficulties in our way, which in truth are not in our way at all.

And thus the case of revelation stood, and the Gospel had no competitor, till the great and successful impostor Mahomet arose: he indeed pretends a commission to all the world, and found means sufficiently to publish his pretences. He asserts his authority upon the strength of revelation, and endeavours to transfer the advantages of the Gospel evidence to himself, having that pattern before him to copy after: and, should we say that the Alcoran was never promulged to us by persons duly commissioned, it may be answered perhaps, that the Alcoran is as well published to us as the Gospel is to them; which has some appearance of an answer, though the fact is indeed otherwise; for even the Alcoran owns Jesus for a true prophet.

But with respect to this instance, I persuade myself it can be no very distracting study to find reasons to determine our choice. Go to your natural religion: lay before her Mahomet and his disciples arrayed in armour and in blood, riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands and tens of thousands, who fell by his victorious sword: shew her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him in this scene, carry her into his retirements, shew her the prophet's chamber, his concubines and wives; let her see his adultery, and hear him allege revelation and his divine commission to justify his lust and his oppression.

When she is tired with this prospect, then shew her the blessed Jesus, humble and meek, doing good to all the sons of men, patiently instructing both the ignorant and the perverse. Let her see him in his most retired privacies : let her follow him to the Mount, and hear his devotions and supplications to God. Carry her to his table, to view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly discourse. Let her see him injured, but not provoked : let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies. Lead her to his cross ; and let her view him in the agony of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors : *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do !*

When natural religion has viewed both, ask, Which is the prophet of God ? But her answer we have already had ; when she saw part of this scene through the eyes of the centurion who attended at the cross ; by him she spoke and said, *Truly this man was the Son of God.* BP. SHERLOCK.

An Infidel's Confession of the sublime Character of Jesus Christ.

I WILL confess to you, that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers with all their pomp of diction : how mean, how contemptible are they compared with the Scripture ! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man ? Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man ? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary ? What sweetness, what purity in his manner ! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery ! What sublimity in his maxims ! What profound wisdom in his discourses ! What presence of mind, what subtlety, what truth in his replies ! How great the command over his passions ! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live, and so die, without weakness and without ostentation ? When Plato described his imaginary good man loaded with all the shame of guilt (yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue), he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ ; the resemblance was so striking, that all the Fathers perceived it.

What prepossession, what blindness must it be, to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the son of Mary ! What an infinite disproportion there is between them ! Socrates dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last ; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was anything more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice ; he had only to say therefore what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been just before Socrates defined justice ; Leonidas had given up his life for his country, before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty ; the Spartans were a sober people, before Socrates recommended sobriety ; before he had even defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only hath given us both precept and example ? The greatest wisdom was made known amongst the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people on earth.

The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophising with his friend, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for : that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonising pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who administered it ; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.

Shall we suppose the Evangelic History a mere fiction ? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction ; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty without obviating it : it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the mora-

lity contained in the gospel, the marks of whose truths are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero.

ROUSSEAU.

The Mystery of Redemption.

THE death of Jesus Christ is a mystery inaccessible to reason, but which all the difficulties that reason can muster, are unable to impair.

It is a mystery inaccessible to reason. Let it explain to me that wonderful union of greatness and depression, of ignominy and glory, of an immortal God with a dying man.

Let reason explain to me, how it comes to pass, that though God is unsusceptible of suffering and dying, the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ should, however, derive all their efficacy from his nature as God.

Let reason explain to me, how Jesus Christ could satisfy divine justice, and be, at the same time, if the expression be lawful, the Judge and the party condemned, the Avenger and the party avenged, he who satisfied, and he to whom satisfaction was made.

Let reason explain to me, how Jesus, nailed to the cross, is nevertheless worthy of the adoration of men and of angels, so that the Jew who crucifies him, is at once his executioner and his creature.

Let reason explain to me, above all, that mystery of love which we see displayed on the cross of Jesus Christ, and how God, who is so great, and so highly exalted, should have vouchsafed to perform, in behalf of man, a being so low and contemptible, wonders so astonishing. Bend, bend, proud Reason, under the weight of these difficulties, and from the extent of these mysteries, learn the narrowness of thy own empire.

It is the wisdom of God in a mystery, which none of the princes of this world knew, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. It is the great mystery of Godliness, 1 Tim. iii. 16. These are the things of the Spirit of God, which the natural man receiveth not, 1 Cor. ii. 14. This is the stumbling-block of the Jew: this is to the Greek foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 23. These are the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, 1 Cor. ii. 9. This is a mystery inaccessible to reason; but it is a mystery,

whose truth and importance all the difficulties which reason can muster, are unable to impair.

The gospel tells us not that greatness and depression, that ignominy and glory, that the mortal, and the immortal Nature, were confounded in the person of Jesus Christ. It simply informs us that God, in the depths of his infinite wisdom, knew how to unite depression to greatness, glory to ignominy, the mortal to the immortal Nature. This is a mystery inaccessible to reason, but against which reason has no title to murmur.

The gospel does not tell us that God, who is unsusceptible of either suffering or death, suffered and died, but that the subject susceptible of suffering, united to the impassible, suffered; that the mortal, united to the immortal subject, died; and that, in virtue of this union, his sufferings and death possess an infinite value. This is a mystery inaccessible to reason, but against which reason has no title to repine.

The gospel does not tell us that Jesus Christ, considered as nailed to a cross, as suffering, as dying, is worthy of adoration, but, in virtue of his intimate union with Deity, that he is an object of adoration to men and to angels. This is a mystery inaccessible to reason, but against it reason has not a title to reclaim.

The gospel does not tell us that man, a being so mean, vile, grovelling, could have merited this prodigy of love; but that God has derived it from himself, as an independent source, and that he considers it as essential to his glory, to acknowledge no other foundation of his benefits, but the misery of those to whom he is pleased to communicate them. This is a misery inaccessible to reason, but against which reason has not a title to reclaim.

SAURIN.

The Account which the New Testament gives of our Redemption by Christ.

THIS is the account which the New Testament gives of the redemption wrought for us by Christ: 'That his death was a satisfaction made to the divine justice for the sins of mankind;' 'That through faith in him we are assured of the forgiveness of our sins upon our repentance and amendment;' 'That being forgiven, we are justified in the sight of God;' 'That being justified in his sight, we are recon-

ciled to him ;' 'That he who reconciles us to God, sanctifies our hearts by the Holy Spirit, to enable us to perform the will of God, and thereby to continue in his favour ;' 'That for the same end he mediates and intercedes for us with God, while we continue in this present life ;' and, 'That through him we have the promise of life eternal.' This is a scene full of comfort to all those who comply with the terms of the gospel ; and, that good Christians may be assured that this is the true account, and that by consequence the hope and comfort they build upon the redemption wrought for them by Christ, and their trust in him, are well founded ; I will give them in one view, and in the words of Scripture, what is plainly delivered there, upon each of the fore-mentioned heads.

1. Christ, by his death, made Satisfaction to the Divine Justice for the sins of mankind. This the Scripture sets forth by the expressions, 'of dying for us,' 'of bearing our sins,' 'of taking away our sins,' 'of being a propitiation for our sins,' 'of purchasing and redeeming or ransoming us with the price of his blood.'

By 'dying for us :' *he laid down his life for us*, 1 John iii. 16 ; *he died for our sins*, 1 Cor. xv. 3 ; *he gave himself for us*, Tit. ii. 14 ; *he was delivered for our offences*, Rom. iv. 25 ; *he tasted death for every man*, Heb. ii. 9. Agreeably to the prophecy concerning him, *he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities*, Isa. liii. 5.

By 'bearing our sins :' *he was once offered to bear the sins of many*, Heb. ix. 28 ; *he bare our sins in his own body on the tree*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. Agreeably to the prophecies concerning him, *he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows*, Isa. liii. 4 ; *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 6.

By 'taking away our sins :' *he was manifested to take away our sins*, 1 John iii. 5 ; *he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, Heb. ix. 26 ; *he hath washed us from our sins in his own blood*, Rev. i. 5 ; *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin*, 1 John i. 7.

By 'being a Propitiation for our sins :' *him God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through faith in his blood*, Rom. iii. 25 ; *God sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins*, 1 John iv. 10 ; *he is the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours*

only, but also for the sins of the whole world, 1 John ii. 2.

By 'purchasing and redeeming or ransoming us with the price of his blood :' *he purchased the Church of God with his own blood*, Acts xx. 28 ; *he came to give his life a ransom for many*, Matt. xx. 28 ; *he gave himself a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 6 ; *we are bought with a price*, 1 Cor. vi. 20 ; *in him we have redemption through his blood*, Eph. i. 7 ; *he hath redeemed us to God by his blood*, Rev. v. 9 ; *we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ*, 1 Pet. i. 19.

2. The Divine Justice being satisfied, we are assured of the forgiveness of our sins through Christ upon a sincere repentance. His forerunner, John the Baptist, preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Christ tells us, *his blood was shed for many for the remission of sins*, Matt. xxvi. 28. After the resurrection, the apostles are directed by him *to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name among all nations*, Luke xxiv. 47. Accordingly, their preaching was this : *Him God hath exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*, Acts v. 31 ; *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins*, Acts ii. 38 ; *Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins*, Acts xiii. 8 ; *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*, Acts x. 43 ; *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*, 2 Cor. v. 19 ; *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins*, Eph. i. 7. And we are commanded to *forgive one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us*, Eph. iv. 32.

3. Our sins being forgiven, we are justified by Christ in the sight of God. *By him all that believe are justified*, Acts xiii. 39 ; *we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus*, 1 Cor. vi. 11 ; *we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*, Rom. iii. 24 ; *being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him*, Rom. v. 9. *God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. *Even the righteousness of*

God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, Rom. iii. 22.

4 Being justified by Christ, we are reconciled to God. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 1. We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son, Rom. v. 10. Us, who were enemies, hath Christ reconciled in the body of his flesh, through death, 1 Cor. i. 21, 22. He hath made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, Col. i. 20. God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. v. 18. Who suffered for sin, that he might bring us unto God, 1 Pet. iii. 18. And, we are accepted in the Beloved, Eph. i. 6.*

5. Having reconciled us to God, he sanctifies our hearts by the Holy Spirit, to enable us to perform our duty, and thereby to continue in God's favor. *We are chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, 2 Thess. ii. 13. And through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, 1 Pet. i. 2. We are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, Heb. x. 10. God hath not called us to uncleanness but unto holiness, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit, 1 Thes. iv. 7, 8. The Spirit of God dwelleth in us, Rom. viii. 9.; and our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 19.; and we are an habitation of God through the Spirit, Eph. ii. 22. We are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and quickened by the Spirit, Tit. iii. 5. and strengthened, John vi. 63. with might by the Spirit in the inner man, Eph. iii. 16. And it is through the Spirit that we mortify the deeds of the body, by which deeds, Rom. viii. 13. we grieve and quench the Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. 1 Thes. v. 19.*

6. He who assists us by his Spirit upon earth, to enable us to do the will of God, and thereby to continue in his favor, is our constant mediator, intercessor, and advocate with God in heaven, to present our prayers for the supply of our wants, and to obtain a compassionate regard to our failings and infirmities, Luke xi, 13. *He is the mediator of the new covenant, Heb. xii. 24. There is one mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. ii. 5. He makes intercession for us at the right hand of God, Rom. viii. 34. He appears in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. No man cometh unto the*

Father but by him, John xiv. 6. He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, Heb. vii. 25. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find grace and mercy to help in time of need, 1 John ii. 1. Heb. iv. 15, 16.; and let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. In him we have boldness, and access with confidence, Heb. x. 22. Eph. iii. 12.

7. As it is he, who enables us to do the will of God and to preserve his favor in this life, so it is *through him* that we are made partakers of life eternal: *The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, John iv. 14.; to seek and to save that which was lost, Luke xix. 10.; that we might live through him, that the world through him might be saved, 1 John iv. 9.; that believing, we might have life through his name, John xx. 31.; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16. Through him we are saved from wrath, John iii. 17. He hath delivered us from the wrath to come, 1 Thes. i. 10. Rom. v. 9. Eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. vi. 23. God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son, 1 John v. 11.; who is the Captain of our salvation, Heb. ii. 10.; the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him, Heb. v. 9. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, Acts iv. 12.*

BP. GIBSON.

The great Work, Price, and Glory of Redemption.

THIS should teach us, 'to have most high and honorable thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is thus all-sufficient to save.' Omnipotency, though it were but to destroy us, were justly the object of our dread and reverence; but omnipotency to save, deserves our most affectionate esteem. It should raise wonder in us, when we consider God's power and goodness in the works of creation; but when we contemplate the work of Redemption, it should raise our wonder to an ecstasy. Christ's almighty power was not so glo-

rious then when he spake the world out of nothing, then when he lifted up the sun into the firmament, and kindled the stars as so many shining torches that dart forth light upon the world, and extend their influences to the whole universe, as when he appeared in flesh, despised, and of no account, in the form of a servant, to accomplish the wonderful work of our redemption. What he did in the former, was by the association and joint-workmanship of the other Persons of the blessed Trinity, but in this the whole work lay upon him. *He trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath alone.* In the former, though he showed his power to be great, yet he did not put it forth to the uttermost; he could have created more worlds, and he might have made more of each sort of creatures, and these far more beautiful and glorious than they are; but in the work of redemption Christ's infinite power is extended to the uttermost, his person was infinite, and his sufferings were infinite, one proportionable to the other. His omnipotency as our Redeemer, is far more glorious than his omnipotency as our Creator. Christ first gives the honor of his all-sufficiency to this end, that for his undertaking so great an employment as the accomplishment of the work of our redemption, we might honor him in his own person, as we honor the Father in his, John v. 26. Certainly there is good reason why we should ascribe honor to him from whom we receive salvation.

BP. HOPKINS.

We shall not disparage you, O ye blessed angels and archangels of heaven, if we shall say, ye are not able to look into the bottom of this divine love, wherewith *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* None, Oh, none can comprehend this mercy, but he that wrought it.

Lord, what a transcendent, what an infinite love is this! What an object was this for thee to love! a world of sinners! impotent, wretched creatures, that had despised thee; that had no motive for thy favor but deformity, misery, professed enmity! It had been mercy enough in thee, that thou didst not damn the world; but that thou shouldest love it, is more than mercy. It was thy great goodness to forbear the acts of just vengeance to the sinful world of man; but to give unto it

tokens of thy love, is a favor beyond all expression. The least gift from thee had been more than the world could hope for; but that thou shouldest give thine only begotten Son, the Son of thy love, the Son of thine essence, thy co-equal, co-eternal Son, who was more than ten thousand worlds, to redeem this one forlorn world of sinners, is love above all comprehension of men and angels. What diminution had it been to thee and thine essential glory, O thou great God of heaven, that the souls that sinned should have died and perished everlastingly? yet so infinite was thy loving mercy, that thou wouldest rather give thine only Son out of thy bosom, than that there should not be a redemption for believers. . . .

And thou, O blessed Jesu, wast accordingly willing, for our sakes, to submit thyself to nakedness, hunger, thirst, weariness, temptation, contempt, betraying, agonies, scorn, buffetings, scourgings, distention, crucifixion, death. O love, above measure, without example, beyond admiration! *Greater love, thou sayest, hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;* but O what is it then, that thou, who wert God and man, shouldest lay down thy life, more precious than many worlds, for thine enemies!

Yet had it been but the laying down of a life in a fair and gentle way, there might have been some mitigation of the sorrow of a dissolution; but thine, O dear Saviour, was the painful, shameful, cursed death of the cross; wherein yet all that man could do unto thee was nothing to that inward torment, which, in our stead, thou enduredst from thy Father's wrath; when, in the bitterness of thine anguished soul, thou criedst out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Even thus, thus wast thou content to be forsaken, that we wretched sinners might be received to mercy. O love, stronger than death which thou vanquishedst! more high than that hell is deep, from which thou hast rescued us!

BP. HALL.

But here what a ransom was necessary! what a price was required! what a price was paid! suited to the dignity of the offended, and the indignity of the offence. Nothing short of this could have effected the purchase; and when nothing else could appear of equal value but his own infinite and eternal person, *Christ gave himself for us.*

Had he ransacked all the stores of nature, the treasures of secret places, this might have purchased the kingdom, but not redeemed one immortal soul from death. Had he given all the world of inanimate nature, and devoted it to destruction, the tribute of the righteous justice of God, in this he might have appeared glorious, but the value had not been equal to the redemption of one soul. Had he given all the generations of men to have saved one, they were all justly forfeited already; and the sacrifice would have shown, in a most tremendous manner, the severity of his justice, but could never have prevailed for the benefit of that one soul, or its deliverance from death. Had all the heavenly hosts been sacrificed for the race of man, here would have been an astonishing gift, most amazing love, most fearful justice; but still no atonement could have been made thereby for the sin of man. He who created had a right to destroy, till his own truth and faithfulness were pledged for preservation; no merit, therefore, could have hence arisen to claim the pardon, the deliverance, the salvation of man.

Behold, then, a gift infinitely beyond; a gift upon which there could be no claim, either of God or man; a sacrifice, the offering of which was infinitely meritorious, suitable to the demands of immutable and infinite justice. This implies that he knew well the nature of his undertaking from the beginning, when, in his amazing love, he engaged for the arduous work; and, therefore, through every step we admire the consistency of his heart, the riches of his grace. Of what an infinite value is the price of our redemption! The very offer implies an ability which could belong to none but the eternal God; such obligation already rested upon every creature as to render them unequal to the task; not God, not Christ, can give a greater gift; but all in heaven and earth can never equal this. The Lord of universal nature, by whom all things were created, and in whom all things exist, *He gave himself!* The Son of God gave himself into human nature, that he might be like his brethren whom he purposed to redeem. He gave himself to be made under the law, that he might be obedient to the law for man. He gave himself to the temptations of the enemy, that he might overcome for us. He

gave himself to bear all our infirmities and our sorrows, that he might remove them from his people. He gave himself to all the conflicts and agony of the garden, to sweat great drops of blood, and drink the bitter cup of Divine indignation, that he might deliver us from the wrath to come. He gave himself into the hands of the cruel mob; to the indignation of rulers, scribes, and priests; into the power of the Roman deputy, to be suspended on the cross, and there *He gave his life*, the ransom of our souls. *I lay down* (says he) *my life for the sheep: I lay down my life, that I might take it again: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*, John x. 11. 15. 17. 18. When seized by the insulting band, falsely accused, approved as innocent by his judge himself, and yet condemned, scourged, and insulted, he bears his cross on his agonising body, with the still deeper weight of our guilt upon his soul; till, suspended on the accursed tree, he bare our sins in his own body on the tree, and appears as one under the curse, while justice exacts the last mite of satisfaction. He who voluntarily undertook, voluntarily submits and resolutely endures, till he could say, *It is finished*; and then he gave up the ghost, and voluntarily resigned his breath.

What was this whole scene of suffering, but the submission of the Redeemer, by his sustaining the actual punishment of our sins? there *he became sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 1 Cor. v. 21. There *it pleased the Father to bruise him, and to put him to grief, when he made his soul an offering for sin*, Isa. liii. 10: there the precious blood was shed, which, as it closed and consummated the scene of his suffering, is generally spoken of as the price of redemption. *We are redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; precious in the sight of God for its infinite value; precious to the conscience of the convinced sinner for its purifying virtue; precious to the heart of every believer for the all-sufficient and everlasting blessings which are obtained by it; precious to all around the throne, who are there alone through its virtue, and because they have washed their robes

in this blood of the Lamb;—and to it the whole company of the redeemed shall ascribe the whole glory and praise throughout eternity. REV. W. GOODE.

The Lord hath done marvellous things, Ps. xcvi. 1. The works of God, I own, both in nature and in the economy of the law, are great and admirable; but the works of grace are incomparably more so. In nature he created a world which must perish; that which he made by grace is eternal. The first was formed out of nothing, which although indifferent as to the form that the Creator would give it, had at least no repugnancy to receive it; the latter, on the contrary, was produced from a refractory matter, already furnished with a form quite contrary to that, which Jesus Christ hath given it. In nature, he created man of the dust of the ground; in grace, he forms him of the incorruptible seed of his word. There, he crowneth a righteous creature with his goodness; here, he justifieth the ungodly, and redeemeth the guilty. There, he nourisheth an innocent creature with the fruits of the earth; here, he feedeth a criminal with the dainties of heaven, with his own flesh and blood. To render Paradise fertile, he watered it with a gentle rain only; but, in order to bring forth our life, he was obliged to sprinkle our earth with his blood. There, the wood of a tree bore the immortality of man; but the fruit of our immortality could be gathered from that tree only on which our Saviour suffered.

To purchase our salvation he was obliged to change the laws of nature, and to do things, which even the understanding of angels could never have conceived. God is made man, *like unto us in all things, sin only excepted*; the Eternal is born; the Infinite encloseth all his glory in a human body; the Invisible is seen by our eyes, and handled with our hands; he joineth in one Person time and eternity, the Creator and the creature, dominion and servitude. Oh, wonderful and incomprehensible union! The Father of eternity is born this day; the King of glory is lying in a manger; He, whom the universe cannot contain, is wrapped in swaddling clothes! This is the beginning only of our admiration; that he should be placed in the lap of Mary, and in the manger at Bethlehem, is far less astonishing, than that he should be crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross on Mount

Calvary. And what can be conceived more incredible than this great mystery; that the God of the universe was crucified between two thieves? that Life tasted death? *The Lord hath done marvellous things*, such as neither nature nor the law ever experienced. J. DAILLE.

The Sufferings of Christ.

The Evangelists have in such language expressed his agony, as cannot but raise in us the highest admiration at the bitterness of that passion. *He began to be sorrowful*, saith Saint Matthew: *He began to be sore amazed*, saith St. Mark; *and to be very heavy*, say both: and yet these words in our translation come far short of the original expression, which render him suddenly, upon a present and immediate apprehension, possessed with fear, horror, and amazement, encompassed with grief, and overwhelmed with sorrow, pressed down with consternation and dejection of mind, tormented with anxiety and disquietude of spirit.

This he first expressed to his disciples, saying, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful*; and lest they should not fully apprehend the excess, adding, *even unto death*; as if the pangs of death had already encompassed him, and, as the Psalmist speaks, the pains of hell had got hold upon him. He went but a little farther before he expressed the same to his Father, falling on his face and praying, *even with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death*, Heb. v. 7. Nor were his cries or tears sufficient evidences of his inward sufferings, nor could the sorrows of his breast be poured forth either at his lips or eyes; the innumerable pores of his body must give a passage to all more lively representations of the bitter anguish of his soul; and therefore while he prayed more earnestly, in that agony *his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground*. As the Psalmist had before declared; *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels*, Psal. xli. 14. The heart of our Saviour was as it were melted with fear and astonishment, and all the parts of his body at the same time inflamed with anguish and agony; well then might that melting produce a sweat, and that inflamed and rarified blood force a passage through the numerous pores.

And as the Evangelist's expressions, so

the occasion of the grief, will manifest the height and bitterness thereof. For God laid on his own Son *the iniquities of us all*, and as we are obliged to be sorry for our particular sins, so was he grieved for the sins of us all. If then we consider the perfection and latitude of his knowledge, he understood all the sins of men for which he suffered, all the evil and the guilt, all the offence against the Majesty, and ingratitude against the goodness of God, which was contained in all those sins. If we look upon his absolute conformity to the will of God, he was inflamed with most ardent love, he was most zealous of his glory, and most studious to preserve that right which was so highly violated by those sins. If we look upon his relation to the sons of men, he loved them all far more than any did themselves, he knew those sins were of themselves sufficient to bring eternal destruction on their souls and bodies, he considered them whom he so much loved as lying under the wrath of God whom he so truly worshipped. If we reflect upon those graces which were without measure diffused through his soul, and caused him with the greatest habitual detestation to abhor all sin, if we consider all these circumstances, we cannot wonder at that grief and sorrow. For if the true contrition of one single sinner, bleeding under the sting of the law only for his own iniquities, all which notwithstanding he knoweth not, cannot be performed without great bitterness of sorrow and remorse; what bounds can we set unto that grief, what measures to that anguish, which proceedeth from a full apprehension of all the transgressions of so many millions of sinners?

BP. PEARSON.

Crucifixion was (as most sharp and afflictive, so) most vile and shameful; being proper to the basest condition of the worst men, and unworthy of a free man, however nocent and guilty. It was *servile supplicium*, a punishment never by the Romans, under whose law our Lord suffered, legally inflicted upon free men, but upon slaves only; that is, upon people scarcely regarded as men, having in a sort forfeited or lost themselves. And among the Jews that execution which most approached thereto, and in part agreed with it, (for their law did not allow any so inhuman punishment), hanging up the dead bodies of some that had been put to death, was held most infamous and execrable: for,

Cursed, said the law, *is every one that hangeth upon a tree*; cursed, that is, devoted to reproach and malediction: *accursed by God*, saith the Hebrew; that is, seeming to be rejected by God, and by his special order exposed to affliction.

Indeed, according to the course of things, to be set on high, and for continuance of time to be objected to the view of all that pass by, in that calamitous posture, doth infuse bad suspicion, doth provoke censure, doth invite contempt and scorn, doth naturally draw forth language of derision, despite, and detestation; especially from the inconsiderate, hard-hearted, and rude vulgar, which commonly doth think, speak and deal according to event and appearance. Whence, *to be made a gazing-stock*, or an object of reproach to the multitude, is by the apostle mentioned as an aggravation of the hardships endured by the primitive Christians. And thus in extremity did it befall our Lord: for we read that the people did in that condition mock, jeer, and revile him; abusing him by scurrilous gestures, letting out their virulent and wanton tongues against him; so as to verify that prediction, *I am a reproach of men, and despised of the people: all they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord, let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him*.

The same persons who formerly had admired his glorious works, who had been ravished with his excellent discourses, who had followed and favored him so earnestly, who had blessed and magnified him, (*for he*, saith St. Luke, *taught in the synagogues, being glorified by all*,) even those very persons did then behold him with pitiless contempt and despite. In correspondence to that prophecy, *they look and stare upon me—the people stood gazing on him*, in a most scornful manner, venting contemptuous and spiteful reproaches; as we see reported in the evangelical story.

Thus did our blessed Saviour *endure the cross, despising the shame*. *Despising the shame*, that is, not simply disregarding it, or (with a stoical haughtiness, with a cynical immodesty, with a stupid carelessness) slighting it as no evil; but not eschewing it, or not rating it for so great an evil, that to decline it he would neglect the prosecution of his great and glorious designs.

There is innate to man an aversion,

and abhorreny from disgraceful abuse, no less strong than are the like antipathies to pain: whence *cruel mockings and scourgings* are coupled as ingredients of the sore persecutions sustained by God's faithful martyrs. And generally men with more readiness will embrace, with more contentedness will endure the cruelty of the latter, than of the former; pain not so smartly affecting the lower sense, as being insolently contemned doth grate upon the fancy, and wound even the mind itself. For, *the wounds of infamy do* (as the wise man telleth us) *go down into the innermost parts of the belly*, reaching the very heart, and touching the soul to the quick.

We therefore need not doubt, but that our Saviour as a man, endowed with human passions, was sensible of this natural evil; and that such indignities did add somewhat of loathsomeness to his cup of affliction; especially considering, that his great charity disposed him to grieve, observing men to act so indecently, so unworthily, so unjustly toward him: yet in consideration of the glory that would thence accrue to God, of the benefit that would redound to us, of the *joy that was set before him*, when *he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*, he most willingly did accept, and most gladly did comport with it. He *became a curse for us*, exposed to malediction and reviling; He *endured the contradiction* (or obloquy) *of sinful men*: He was *despised, rejected and disesteemed of men*: He in common apprehension was deserted by God according to that of the prophet, *We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*; himself even seeming to concur in that opinion. So was he *made a curse for us*, that *we*, as the apostle teacheth, *might be redeemed from the curse of the law*; that is, that we might be freed from the exemplary punishment due to our transgressions of the law, with the displeasure of God appearing therein, and the disgrace before the world attending it. He chose thus to *make himself of no reputation*, vouchsafing to be dealt with as a wretched slave, and a wicked miscreant, that we might be exempted, not only from the torment, but also from the ignominy which we had merited; that together with our life, our safety, our liberty, we might even recover that honor which we had forfeited and embezzled.

But lest any should be tempted not sufficiently to value these sufferances of

our Lord, as not so rare, but that other men have tasted the like; lest any should presume to compare them with afflictions incident to other persons, as Celsus did compare them with those of Anaxarchus and Epictetus; it is requisite to consider some remarkable particulars about them.

We may then consider, that not only the infinite dignity of his person, and the perfect innocency of his life did enhance the price of his sufferings; but some endowments peculiar to him, and some circumstances adhering to his design, did much augment their force.

He was not only, according to the frame and temper of human nature, sensibly touched with the pain, the shame, the whole combination of disasters apparently waiting on his Passion; as God (when he did insert sense and passion into our nature, ordering objects to affect them) did intend we should be, and as other men in like circumstances would have been; but in many respects beyond that ordinary rate: so that no man, we may suppose, could have felt such grief from them as he did, no man ever hath been sensible of any thing comparable to what he did endure; that passage being truly applicable to him, *Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger*; as that unparalleled *sweating out great lumps of blood* may argue; and as the terms expressing his resentments do intimate. For, in respect of present evils, he said of himself, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful to death*; he is said *to be in great anguish and anxiety*, to be in *an agony* or pang of sorrow. In regard to mischiefs which he saw coming on, he is said to be *disturbed in spirit*, and to be *sore amazed*, or dismayed at them. To such an exceeding height did the sense of incumbent evils, and the prospect of impendent calamities, the apprehension of his case, together with a reflexion on our condition, screw up his affections.

And no wonder that such a burden, even the weight of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and abominations) that ever were committed by mankind, by appropriation of them to himself, lying on his shoulders, he should feel it heavy, or seem to crouch and groan under it; that in the mystical psalm, applied by the apostle to him, he should cry out, *Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine ini-*

quities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart faileth me. The sight of God's indignation so dreadfully flaming out against sin, might well astonish and terrify him: to stand, as it were, before the mouth of hell belching fire and brimstone in his face; to lie down in the hottest furnace of divine vengeance; to quench with his own heart-blood the wrath of heaven, and the infernal fire, (as he did in regard to those who will not rekindle them to themselves,) might well in the heart of a man beget unconceivable and unexpressible pressures of affliction. When such a Father (so infinitely good and kind to him, whom he so dearly and perfectly loved) did hide his face from him, did frown on him, how could he otherwise than be mightily troubled? Is it strange that so hearty a love, so tender a pity, contemplating our sinfulness, and experimenting our wretchedness, should be deeply touched? To see, I say, so plainly, to feel so thoroughly the horrible blindness, the folly, the infidelity, the imbecility, the ingratitude, the incorrigibility, the strange perverseness, perfidiousness, malice and cruelty of mankind in so many instances, (in the treason of Judas, in the denial of Peter, in the desertion of all the apostles, in the spite and rage of the persecutors, in the falsehood of the witnesses, in the abuses of the people, in the compliance of Pilate, in a general conspiracy of friends and foes to sin,) all these surrounding him, all invading him, all discharging themselves upon him; would it not astound a mind so pure? would it not wound a heart so tender and full of charity?

Surely, any of those persons who fondly do pretend unto, or vainly do glory in a sullen apathy, or a stubborn contempt of the evils incident to our nature and state, would in such a case have been utterly dejected. The most resolved philosopher would have been dashed into confusion at the sight, would have been crushed into desperation under the sense of those evils which did assault him.

With the greatness of the causes, the goodness of his constitution did conspire to increase his sufferings. For surely, as his complexion was most pure and delicate, his spirit most vivid and apprehensive, his affections most pliant and tractable; so accordingly would the impressions upon him be most sensible, and conse-

quently the pains which he felt (in body or soul) most afflictive.

That we in like cases are not alike moved; that we do not tremble at the apprehensions of God's displeasure, that we are not affrighted with the sense of our sins, that we do not with sad horror resent our danger and our misery, doth arise from that we have very glimmering and faint conceptions of those matters; or that they do not in so clear and lively a manner strike our fancy; (not appearing in their true nature and proper shape, so heinous and so hideous as they really are in themselves and in their consequences;) or because we have but weak persuasions about them; or because we do but slightly consider them; or from that our hearts are very hard and callous, our affections very cold and dull, so that nothing of this nature (nothing beside gross material affairs) can mollify or melt them; or for that we have in us small love to God, and a slender regard to our own welfare; in fine, for that in spiritual matters we are neither so wise, so sober, so serious, nor so good or ingenuous, in any reasonable measure, as we should be. But our Saviour in all those respects was otherwise disposed. He most evidently discerned the wrath of God, the grievousness of sin, the wretchedness of man, most truly, most fully, most strongly represented to his mind: He most firmly believed, yea most certainly knew, whatever God's law had declared about them: He did exactly consider and weigh them: His heart was most soft and sensible, His affections were most quick and excitable by their due objects: He was full of dutiful love to God, and most ardently desirous of our good, bearing a more than fraternal good-will towards us. Whence it is not so marvellous that as a man, as a transcendently wise and good man, he was so vehemently affected by those occurrences, that his imagination was so troubled, and his passions so stirred by them; so that he thence did suffer in a manner, and to a degree unconceivable; according to that ejaculation in the Greek liturgies, *Διὰ τῶν ἀγνώστων σου παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, Κριστὲ, By thy unknown sufferings, O Christ, have mercy on us!*

DR. BARROW.

Necessity for both the Active and Passive Obedience of Christ.

THE Son, assuming our nature into his Deity, became subject and obedient both

to the moral and ceremonial laws of his Father, and at last to death itself, *even the death of the cross*. In the one he paid an active, in the other a passive obedience; and so did not only fulfil the will of his Father in obeying what he had commanded, but satisfied his justice in suffering the punishment due to us for the transgressing of it. His active obedience, as it was infinitely pure and perfect, did without doubt infinitely transcend all the obedience of the sons of men, even of Adam too in his primitive state; for the obedience of Adam, make the best of it, was but the obedience of a finite creature, whereas the obedience of Christ was the obedience of one that was infinite God, as well as man. By which means the laws of God had higher obedience performed to them, than themselves in their primitive institution required; for being made only to finite creatures, they could command no more than the obedience of finite creatures, whereas the obedience of Christ was the obedience of one who was the infinite Creator, as well as a finite creature.

Now this obedience being more than Christ was bound to, and only performed upon the account of those whose nature he had assumed, as we by faith lay hold upon it, so God through grace imputes it to us, as if it had been performed by us in our own persons. And hence it is, that as in one place Christ is said to be *made sin for us*, so in another place he is said to be *made unto us righteousness*. And in the fore-cited place, 2 Cor. v. 21. as he is said to be made *sin for us*, so we are said to be *made righteousness* in him: but what righteousness? Our own? No, *the righteousness of God*, radically his, but imputatively ours: and this is the only way whereby we are said to be *made the righteousness of God*, even by the righteousness of Christ being made ours, by which we are accounted and reputed as righteous before God.

These things considered, I very much wonder how any man can presume to exclude the active obedience of Christ from our justification before God; as if what Christ did in the flesh was only of duty, not at all of merit; or as if it was for himself, and not for us; especially when I consider, that suffering the penalty is not what the law primarily requireth; for the law of God requires perfect obedience, the penalty being only threatened to, not properly required of, the breakers of it.

For, let a man suffer the penalty of the law in never so high a manner, he is not therefore accounted obedient to it; his punishment doth not speak his innocence, but rather his transgression of the law.

Hence it is that I cannot look upon Christ as having made full satisfaction to God's justice for me, unless he had performed the obedience I owe to God's laws, as well as borne the punishment that is due to my sins: for, though he should have borne my sins, I cannot see how that could denominate me righteous or obedient to the law, so as to entitle me to eternal life, according to the tenor of the old law, *Do this and live*: which old covenant is not disannulled or abrogated by the covenant of grace, but rather established, especially as to the obedience it requires from us in order to the life it promiseth; otherwise the laws of God would be mutable, and so come short of the laws of the very Medes and Persians, which altered not. Obedience therefore is as strictly required under the New as it was under the Old Testament, but with this difference—there, obedience in our own persons was required as absolutely necessary; here, obedience in our Surety is accepted as completely sufficient.

But now if we have no such obedience in our Surety, as we cannot have if he did not live as well as die for us, let any one tell me what title he hath or can have to eternal life? I suppose he will tell me he hath none in himself, because he hath not performed perfect obedience to the law; and I tell him he hath none in Christ, unless Christ performed that obedience for him, which none can say he did, that doth not believe his active as well as passive obedience to be wholly upon our account.

And now I speak of Christ's being our Surety, as the apostle calls him, methinks this gives much light to the truth in hand; or what is a surety, but one that undertakes to pay whatsoever he, whose surety he is, is bound to pay, in case the debtor prove non-solvent or unable to pay it himself? And thus is Christ, under the notion of a surety, bound to pay whatever we owe to God, because we ourselves are not able to pay it in our own persons.

Now there are two things that we owe to God, which this our Surety is bound to pay for us, namely, first and principally, obedience to his laws as he is our Creator

and Governor, and, secondly, by consequence, the punishment that is annexed to the breach of these laws, of which we are guilty. Now, though Christ should pay the latter part of our debt for us by bearing the punishment that is due unto us, yet if he did not pay the former and principal part of it too, that is, perform the obedience which we owe to God, he would not fully have performed the office of suretyship which he undertook for us, and so would be but a half-mediator or half-saviour; which are such words, as I dare scarce pronounce for fear of blasphemy.

So that, though it is the death of Christ by which I believe my sins are pardoned, yet it is the life of Christ by which I believe my person is accepted. His passions God accounts as suffered by me, and therefore I shall not die for sin; his obedience God accounts as performed by me, and therefore I shall live with him. Not as if I believed that Christ so performed obedience for me, that I should be discharged from my duty to him; but only that I should not be condemned by God in not discharging my duty to him in so strict a manner as is required. I believe the active obedience of Christ will stand me in no stead, unless I endeavor after sincere obedience in mine own person; his active as well as his passive obedience being imputed unto none, but only to such as apply it to themselves by faith; which faith in Christ will certainly put such as are possessed of it upon obedience unto God. This, therefore, is the righteousness, and the manner of that justification, whereby I hope to stand before the judgment-seat of God, even by God's imputing my sins to Christ and Christ's righteousness to me; looking upon me as one not to be punished for my sins, because Christ hath suffered, but to be received into the joys of glory, because Christ hath performed obedience for me, and does by faith, through grace, impute it to me.

BP. BEVERIDGE.

That this righteousness of Christ, thus made ours, may serve to all ends and purposes for which we stand in need of a righteousness, it is necessary, that both his active righteousness, or his righteousness of obedience, and also his passive righteousness, the righteousness of his satisfaction in suffering for us, be made

ours; and imputed to us for our justification.

Though this position be much controverted; yet possibly, the truth of it will appear from the grounds formerly laid, viz. that there are two ends, for which we stand in need of a righteousness: the one, is a freeing of us from the penalty threatened; the other, is an entitling of us to the reward promised. Now had we no other but the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction made over unto us, this indeed would perfectly free us from our liability to punishment; for if our Surety hath undergone it for us, we ourselves are not liable: but, still, we should need a righteousness to entitle us to the reward; and that must necessarily be a righteousness of perfect obedience. For, as I noted before, it is not said, 'Suffer this, and live:' but 'Do this, and live:' and, consequently, it must be obedience and not suffering, the active and not the passive righteousness of Christ, that can give us a right unto eternal life. It is true, the satisfaction of Christ doth give a right unto eternal life concomitantly, but not formally; that is, wherever guilt is removed, there a title to heaven is procured: yet the formal reason of our title to heaven is different from the formal reason of the remission of our sins: this results from the imputation of Christ's sufferings; that, of his obedience.

BP. HOPKINS.

In order to justification before God, it is as necessary that the active, as that the passive, obedience of Christ be imputed. It is *by the obedience of One that many are made righteous*, Rom. v. 19.; and it is *the righteousness of One, which is imputed to many for justification of life*. The satisfactory sufferings and death of Christ, are indeed the ground, of a believing sinner's deliverance from the penalty or curse of the law; the ground, of the pardon of all his past breaches of it. But this alone, would leave him still under the law in its covenant form, for the time to come; so that every new breach of it would render him liable anew to eternal death. It is requisite therefore that he have, in addition to the former, a righteousness comprising perfect conformity of nature and of life to the preceptive part of the law; to be the ground of his deliverance from it as a covenant, for the time to come. Such a righteousness he needs, as is answerable to the

law's demand of perfect holiness of nature, and perfect obedience of life, the original and unalterable conditions of eternal life. As it is by the satisfactory sufferings and death of Christ,* that he obtains deliverance from condemnation to eternal death; so, *it is by the meritorious obedience of Christ, that he obtains a title to eternal life*, Rom. v. 18. 21. And yet these two are but one undivided righteousness, to be relied on, for one undivided salvation, from eternal death to eternal life. Now if this whole righteousness of Christ be not imputed to a believing sinner, how can he, in the sight of God, be made righteous, and that as the thief on the cross was, in a moment? If a man has no perfect righteousness from himself, he must then have it from another; and from whom can he have it, but from Jesus Christ, who is 'Jehovah our Righteousness'?† If it is not a righteousness *within* the believer, rendering him inherently and absolutely perfect, it must be a righteousness *upon* him, by being imputed to him. If it is imputed, as the Scripture affirms it to be, (Rom. iv. throughout,) it must be such a righteousness as his case requires; such a righteousness as will not only secure him from eternal death, but entitle him to everlasting life. Let this then comfort thee, believer, amidst all thy perplexities and distresses, all thy doubts and fears. Thou hast a righteousness imputed to thee, which is infinitely perfect, infinitely meritorious of life eternal. Arrayed in this spotless robe, interested in this divinely excellent, this transcendently glorious righteousness, thou hast an undoubted, an unbounded title, to all the grace and glory promised in the eternal covenant. O rely on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which can never fail thee: and in a little thou shalt sit down among

the blessed above, and eternally shout forth the praises of that dear Lord Jesus, who not only redeemed thee from sin and misery, but exalted thee to a throne of glory above the angels in heaven. Then, thou wilt be astonished at the languor and coldness of the warmest heart that ever contemplated Jesus here below; and with joy ineffable be surprised to find that not the half, nor the thousandth part respecting him, and his righteousness, could in this world be told thee.

DR. COLQUHOUN.

Expostulation with the Sinner upon the Sufferings and Humiliation of Christ.

IT was for thy sake that the Judge did suffer unspeakable pains, such as were sufficient to reconcile all the world to God. And to consider that thou hast, for thine own particular, made all this in vain, and ineffective; that Christ thy Lord and Judge should be tormented for nothing; that thou wouldest not accept felicity and pardon, when he purchased them at so dear a price; it must needs be an infinite condemnation to thee. How shalt thou look upon him that fainted and died for love of thee, and thou didst scorn his miraculous mercies? How shalt thou dare to behold that holy face which brought salvation to thee, and thou didst turn away, and fall in love with death, and deformity, and sin? And yet in the beholding that face consists much of the glories of eternity. Surely all the pains and the passions, the sorrows and the groans, the humility and poverty, the labours, and the watchings, the prayers and the sermons, the miracles and the prophecies, the whip and the nails, the death and the burial, the shame and the smart, the cross and the grave of Jesus, shall be laid upon thy score, if thou hast refused the mercies and design of all their holy ends and purposes. And if thou rememberest what a calamity that was, which broke the Jewish nation in pieces, when Christ came to judge them for their murdering him, who was their king, and the prince of life; and considerest, that this was but a dark image of the terrors of the day of judgment, thou mayest then apprehend, that there is some strange unspeakable evil in store for one who refuses the salvation of Jesus, and rather chooses that Satan should rejoice in his destruction, than that Jesus should triumph in his felicity.

BP. TAYLOR.

* Suffering for punishment, gives a right and title to nothing, only satisfies for something; nor doth it deserve any reward: it is no where said, 'Suffer this and live,' but 'Do this and live.' OWEN on Justification, p. (mili) 464.

† To show, that this divinely excellent righteousness of Jehovah the incarnate Son is imputed to believers, and is meritorious of life to them, it is in Scripture styled,—'The righteousness of God;' Rom. i. 17. 'The righteousness which is of [or, from] God;' Phil. iii. 9. 'The righteousness by faith;' Rom. iii. 22. 'The righteousness of the faith;' Rom. iv. 11. 'Righteousness without the law;' Rom. iii. 21. 'Righteousness without works;' Rom. iv. 6. Righteousness 'by the obedience of One;' Rom. v. 19. 'Righteousness not our own;' Phil. iii. 9. and 'righteousness imputed by God.' Rom. iv. 6, 10. 22. 24.

His Blood be on us, and on our Children.

His blood be on us, and on our children, Matt. xxvii. 25. This was the imprecation of those barbarous Jews, who with importunity demanded the death of Jesus Christ, and glutted themselves with his sufferings. But it was, in a far different sense, the interior voice of those believing souls, who entered into the design of God, who, by faith, sprinkled themselves with this blood, which was to form the bond of union between heaven and earth.

His blood be on us, and on our children. This is the voice which now resounds from ear to ear, and which must be accomplished on this assembly, in one sense or another. Yes, this blood shall be upon you, in vengeance and malediction, as it was upon ungrateful Jerusalem, in your families to trouble their peace, in your plans to defeat them, in your establishments to sap them to the foundation, in your consciences to harrow them up, in your death-bed to darken it with horror and despair, and through all the periods of eternity demanding the expiation of the crime, of having trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God, and of having crucified afresh the Lord of glory. Or it will be upon you, yes, this blood will be upon you, to strengthen you under all your infirmities, to preserve you in the hour of temptation, to console you under the pressure of calamity, to speak peace to the troubled conscience, to support you in dying agony, to render your death blessed, and eternity triumphant. SAURIN.

The Offence of the Cross.

THE poverty and meanness in which our Saviour appeared, was the earliest, and may probably be the latest, objection to the gospel. He came from God, to convert and to save the world, to declare the purposes and the commands of the Almighty, and to exact obedience from every creature; but he came with less attendance and show than if he had been an ordinary messenger from the governor of a province. Hence it is, that we so often find him upbraided either with the meanness of his parentage, the obscurity of his country, or the present necessity of his circumstances: *Is not this the carpenter's son?* says one; *Can any good come out of Nazareth?* says another; *or any prophet out of Galilee?* says a third. And when they saw him oppressed with sufferings, and weighed

down with afflictions, they openly insulted his sorrow, and triumphed over his fond pretences to save the world: *Thou, say they, that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.* And so blinded are men with the notions of worldly greatness, and so apt to conceive of the majesty of God according to their own ideas of power and dignity, that this prejudice has prevailed in every age. The apostle to the Corinthians preached Christ crucified; but he was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness: for the Jews required a sign, a visible temporal deliverance, and had no notion, much less any want, that they could apprehend, of such a Saviour as Jesus. The Greeks sought after wisdom; and thought, that if God were indeed to redeem the world, he would act more suitably to his power and wisdom. Whenever they made their Jupiter speak, his voice was thunder, and lightning was his appearance, and he delivered oracles not to be communicated to vulgar ears. So in the Old Testament, when God speaks, clouds and darkness are round about him, and his presence and his voice are terrible. But here every thing had a different turn: the appearance was in the likeness of a man, and in the form of a servant; and as he came in like a servant, he went out like a slave: *he was esteemed stricken, and his departure was taken for misery.* His doctrine was framed rather to purify the heart, and to give wisdom to the simple, than to exercise the head and furnish matter for the curious and learned; to be a general instruction, and a common rule of life to all men, and not to satisfy the vanity of worldly wisdom in inquiries above its reach. With him the precepts of virtue are the principles of wisdom, and holiness the greatest ornament of the mind of man.

But these things the wise and the great men of the world find hard to reconcile with the wisdom and majesty of God, according to their notions of wisdom and power. Why did not Christ, say they, appear in the power and majesty of his Father? Would not the embassy have been more worthy both of God and of him? Would any prince who had a mind to reclaim his rebellious subjects to obedience, not rather choose to send a person of honor with a suitable retinue, whose appearance might command respect

and credit, than an ambassador clothed in rags and poverty, fit only to create in the rebels a greater contempt both of himself and his prince? If it was the purpose of God, that the world through faith should be saved, would not the world more securely and readily have confided in one whose very appearance would have spoke his dignity, than in one who seemed to be even more miserable than themselves, and not able to rescue himself from the vilest and most contemptible death?

But let us now, in the second place, consider what foundation there is in reason for this great prejudice.

It is no wonder to hear men reason upon the notions and ideas which are familiar to them. Great power and great authority are connected with the ideas of great pomp and splendor; and, when we talk of the works of God, our minds naturally turn themselves to view the great and miraculous works of Providence: and this is the reason why men are slow to discern the hand of God in the ordinary course of nature, where things being familiar to us, do not strike with wonder and admiration.

When Naaman the Syrian came to the prophet of Israel to be cured of his leprosy, Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, *Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean.* The haughty Syrian disdained the easy cure, and scorned the prophet: Is this your man of God, and this his mighty power, to send me to a pitiful river of Israel? *Behold*, says he, *I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?* So he turned and went away in a rage. But his servants, not a little wiser than their master, thus reason the case with him: *My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith unto thee, Wash and be clean?* Upon this gentle rebuke his stomach came down, and he condescended to follow the prophet's direction; *and his flesh came again like the flesh of a young child, and he was clean.* Not unlike to Naaman's folly is theirs, who take offence at the poverty and meanness of the Author

of our Redemption. His sentiments and theirs agree: he expected to have seen some surprising wonder wrought for his cure; and when he was bid only to wash, he thought there could be nothing of God in so trifling a remedy. And is not this their sense, who think that so obscure, so mean a person as Jesus, could never be the messenger of God upon so great an errand as the salvation of the world? who thus expostulate; Why came he not in a majesty suitable to his employment, and then we would have believed him? but how can we expect to be raised to the glory of God by him, who was himself the scorn and contempt of men?

If we search this prejudice to the bottom, we shall find that it arises from a false conception of the power and majesty of God, as if the success of his purposes depended upon the visible fitness of the instruments he made choice of. With men we know the case is so; they must use means which they can judge to be adapted to the end they aim at, if they intend to prosper in what they undertake: but with God it is otherwise. To stop the current even of the smallest river, banks must be raised, and sluices cut, when the work is done by man: but in the hand of God, the rod of Moses was more than sufficient to curb the rage of the sea, and force it to yield a passage to his people. *The foolishness of God*, says the apostle, *is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men*: teaching us, that we should not presume to sit in judgment upon the methods of Providence; since, how foolish or how weak soever they may seem to us, they will be found in his hand to be the wisest and the strongest. And this reasoning the apostle applies to the case now before us: *The cross of Christ was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto all them which are called, the power of God, and the wisdom of God; because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.* However the Jews, or however the Greeks conceived of the crucified Jesus, yet to every believer he is the mighty *power of God to salvation*, because God ordained him so to be; and this ordination gives full efficacy to the cross of Christ, however in itself contemptible, and to all human appearance unfit for the purpose. The waters of Jordan had no natural efficacy to cleanse a leper: in the rod of Moses there

was no power to divide the sea : but when ordained by God to these purposes, the sea fled back at the touch of Moses's rod, and the leprosy of Naaman was purged by the so much despised waters of Israel. If we would judge truly, the more simple and plain the methods of Providence are, the more do they speak the power of the Almighty. When God said, *Let there be light, and there was light*, his uncontrollable power more evidently appeared, than if all the angels of heaven had been employed to produce it. When our Lord said, *I will, be thou clean*, and the person was cleansed, his Divinity shone forth more brightly than if he had commanded all the powers above visibly to assist him. So likewise, when God committed the redemption of the world to Jesus, a man of sorrow and affliction, and of no form or comeliness, and gave him the power of doing such works as never man did, in confirmation of his commission, he appeared as plainly in him as if he had clothed him with visible majesty and power. If we consider him afflicted and tormented, and given up to a cruel death, it proves indeed that he was weak and mortal ; but still God is strong, and not the less able to establish the word which he spoke by this weak, this mortal man.

As to this part of the offence then, so far as the majesty and power of God are concerned, it proceeds from very wrong notions in both cases, and supposes that the majesty of God wants the same little supports of outward pomp and grandeur as that of men does, and that his power depends upon the fitness of instrumental or material causes, as human power plainly does ; whereas the majesty and power of God are never more clearly seen, than when he makes choice of the *weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty*.

Let us then, in the next place, consider, with respect to men, whether the advantages on their side would have been greater, had Christ appeared in greater splendor, and with more visible power and authority.

How far the imaginations of some men may rove upon such inquiries as these, or what degrees of splendor and glory they would judge sufficient for their purpose, I cannot tell : this we are sure of, that the majesty of the Almighty is not to be approached by human eyes ; that therefore, whenever it descends to treat with men,

it must be veiled and obscured under such representations as men can bear. This is true, you will say ; but is there no medium between the immediate presence of God and his appearing in the form of a servant, and dying, not as the children of men commonly die, but as the vilest and most profligate criminal ? Many degrees there are, no doubt, of visible glory, in any of which Christ might have appeared, but in none with greater advantage to religion than that in which he came. Suppose he had come, as the Jews expected, in the form of a mighty prince, and in that situation had propagated his faith and doctrine, what would the unbelievers then have said ? how often should we have been told before now, that our religion was the work of human policy, and that our prince's doctrine and dominions were extended by the same sword ? Was ever any religion the better thought of for having been preached at the head of an army ? This is certain, that to make religion a rational act of the mind, it cannot be conveyed to us in too easy and familiar a manner : the less awe we have of our teacher, the more freedom we shall exercise in weighing and examining his doctrines. And upon this account, our Saviour's appearance was in the most proper form, as it gave to men the greatest scope and liberty of trying and searching into his doctrines and pretences ; and therefore his meanness and poverty should least of all be objected by those who seem to contend for nothing more than to clear religion from fears and prejudices.

But perhaps they will say, We wanted him not to appear in worldly state and glory, or to exercise temporal dominion on earth : we would have been contented with a visible, though an inferior kind of manifestation of his divine authority. *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written !* What think ye of giving sight to the blind ; of opening the ears of the deaf ; of loosening the tongue that was dumb ; of restoring health to the sick ; of raising the dead to life again ; of raising even himself from the grave, and abolishing the scandal of the cross by a visible victory and triumph over death ! What do you call these things ? what do they manifest to you ? Are these the works of that mean man, that wretched, that crucified mortal, of whom we have been speaking ? Do slaves and servants, nay, do princes and the greatest of the children of men, use to perform such

works? If not, these are the very manifestations of divine power and authority which you require. Nor can it, I believe, enter into the heart of man to contrive any greater signs to ask of any person pretending to a divine commission, than these which our Saviour daily and publicly gave the world of his authority. Had he appeared with all the visible power and glory which you can conceive, yet still you cannot imagine what greater works than these he could possibly perform: and therefore the evidence now, under all the meanness of his appearance, is the same for his divine authority and commission, as it would have been, had he come in the greatest pomp of glory and power.

As to us, I think, who are removed at a distance from the scene of this action, the evidence is much greater. Had he come in surprising glory, we might have suspected the relations of men, who, we might well think, saw and heard every thing under the greatest astonishment, and, like St. Paul, when he was caught up to the third heavens, could hardly tell whether they were in the body, or out of the body; but now we have the evidence of men who lived and conversed with him familiarly, who saw all his mighty works, and saw them without surprise or astonishment, being reconciled to them by daily use, and the long-experienced gentleness and love of their Master; and therefore they very justly introduce their accounts with this assurance, *That they relate that only which they had heard, which they had seen with their eyes, which they had looked upon, and which their hands had handled of the Word of life.* So far are we then from having any just cause of offence in the poverty and meanness of our blessed Lord, that from those circumstances arises the great stability of our faith, and this comfortable assurance, that our faith standeth not in the words or in the works of man's wisdom and power, but in the power and in the wisdom of the Almighty, who knows how to produce strength out of weakness. BP. SHERLOCK.

I know the sufferings of Christ were, by the *wise of the world*, made the great objection against the wisdom of this dispensation; the *cross of Christ was to the Greeks foolishness*; and yet the wisest of them had determined otherwise in general, though not in this particular case. Plato (in the second book of his common-

wealth) saith, 'That if a man may be a perfect pattern of justice and righteousness, and be approved by God and men, he must be stripped of all the things of this world; he must be poor and disgraced, and be accounted a wicked and unjust man, he must be whipped, and tormented, and crucified as a malefactor;' which is, as it were, a prophetic description of our Saviour's sufferings. And Arrian, in his epistle, describing a man fit to reform the world, whom he calls 'the apostle, the messenger, the preacher, and minister of God, saith, he must be without house and harbour, and worldly accommodations; must be armed with such patience for the greatest sufferings, as if he were a stone, and devoid of sense; he must be a spectacle of misery and contempt to the world.' So that by the acknowledgment of these two wise heathens, there was nothing in the sufferings of Christ that was unbecoming the wisdom of God, and improper to the end and design of Christ's coming into the world; besides, that they served a further end, which they did not dream of, *the satisfying of divine justice.*

ABP. TILLOTSON.

The Glory of the Cross.

UNLIKELY doctrine to a carnal mind: that there should be more of God's glory manifested to us in the face of Christ crucified, than in the face of heaven and earth; the face of Christ, in which sense discovers nothing but marks of pain and disgrace; that blotted, mangled visage, red with gore, covered with marks of scorn, swelled with strokes, and pale with death; that would be the last object in which the carnal mind would seek to see the glory of the God of life; a visage clouded with the horror of death; it would with more pleasure and admiration, view the same face when transfigured, and shining like the sun in its strength. Divine glory shone indeed then in a bright manner in that face on the mount; but not so brightly, as on mount Calvary: this was the more glorious transfiguration of the two. Though all the light in the world in the sun and stars, were collected together into one stupendous mass of light, it would be but darkness to the glory of this seemingly dark and melancholy object: for it is here, as the apostle expresses it, 2 Cor. iii. 18., *we all as with open face may behold the glory of God.*

Here shines spotless justice, incomprehensible wisdom, and infinite love all at once; none of them darkens or eclipses the other, every one of them gives a lustre to the rest. They mingle their beams, and shine with united eternal splendor: The just Judge, the merciful Father, and the wise Governor. No other object gives such a display of all these perfections, yea all the objects we know, give not such a display of any one of them. No where does justice appear so awful, mercy so amiable, or wisdom so profound.

REV. J. MACLAURIN.

The rich Consolation afforded by the Mystery of the Cross.

WHAT sources of consolation are opened in these mysterious truths! Where is there a spring of comfort to man, which does not rise from a doctrine surrounded in some view with impenetrable darkness? Whence any peace of conscience but from the mysterious sacrifice of the cross? Whence the disposition and power to repent and seek God, but from the mysterious influences of the Spirit? Whence the softest consolations of the heart in trouble, but from the mysterious communion of God with the soul? And what is there so consolatory as that incarnation of the Son of God, which is shrouded with the deepest darkness? It is in this mystery that are involved the condescension and pity of the Almighty. It is here that the invisible God becomes tangible, as it were, and perceptible to man. It is here, that the distance and dread which sin has interposed, are removed.

In short, the one stupendous act of the love of God in the gift of his Son, which is the distinguishing truth of Christianity, is so incomparably consoling, and at the same time so humiliating, as to form, from this united impression, the strongest evidence of its divine glory and excellency. It is here the restorative character of revealed truth rises to the highest point—that all is shown to be summed up in an exhibition of divine love—that every thing else is seen to be only preparatory to this, or consequent upon it. This is the epitome of the Christian doctrines. Redemption is the manifestation of the character of love in the ever-blessed God. The incarnation is, so to speak, Love itself made Man; whilst the operations of the Holy Ghost are a diffusion of the same divine love.

How does this consideration raise these internal evidences (of Christianity!) how

does it invest them with a matchless excellency! how does it render the very mysteries which result from the infinite condescension of God, in taking our nature upon him, a part of the proof of their divine origin! how do the very depths of darkness, with which we feel ourselves surrounded in certain points of view, enhance the consolation which flows in a full tide upon the soul, from the practical effects and tendencies of the doctrines which arise from them, and which guide and illuminate our path! REV. D. WILSON.

Christ is the Only Saviour of Sinners, and the Only Foundation upon which we can build.

I do not only believe Christ to be my Saviour, but I believe only Christ to be my Saviour. It was he alone that trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath, filled with the sour and bitter grapes of my sins. It was he that carried on the great work of my salvation, being himself both the Author and the Finisher of it. I say, it was he, and he alone; for what person or persons in the world could do it besides himself? The angels could not if they would; the devils would not if they could; and as for my fellow-creatures, I may as well satisfy for their sins as they for mine; and how little able, even the best of us are to do either, that is, to atone either for our own transgressions or those of others, every man's experience will sufficiently inform him. For how should we, poor worms of the earth, ever hope by the slime and mortar, if I may so speak, of our own natural abilities, to raise up a tower, whose top may reach to heaven? Can we expect by the strength of our own hands to take heaven by violence; or by the price of our works to purchase eternal glory? It is a matter of admiration to me, how any one that pretends to the use of his reason can imagine, that he should be accepted before God for what comes from himself! For how is it possible that I should be justified by good works, when I can do no good works at all before I be first justified? My works cannot be accepted as good till my person be so; nor can my person be accepted by God, till first ingrafted into Christ; before which ingrafting into the true vine, it is impossible I should bring forth good fruit; for *the ploughing of the wicked is sin*, says Solomon; yea, *the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord*. And if

both the civil and spiritual actions of the wicked be sin, which of all their actions shall have the honor to justify them before God? I know not how it is with others, but, for my own part, I do not remember, neither do I believe, that I ever prayed in all my life-time with that reverence, or heard with that attention, or received the Sacrament with that faith, or did any other work whatsoever with that pure heart and single eye, as I ought to have done. Insomuch that I look upon all my *righteousness but as filthy rags*; and it is in the robes only of the righteousness of the Son of God that I dare appear before the Majesty of heaven. BP. BEVERIDGE.

St. Paul says, that whoever would successfully labor for the edification of the Church, must build on that foundation which he had laid among the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11. *Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* What is properly the foundation we have in God our Saviour? Is it this only, that he is the author of our salvation, and that we by our own works should afterwards finish it? Or hath he paved the way only for us, and having led us into it, does he leave us to our own industry and strength to continue in it? Certainly not! but our ground is, to know and to believe that he is made unto us righteousness. No one, therefore, can be truly grounded in Christ Jesus, except he has found his complete righteousness in him alone; for the apostle says not, that he was given to us, to assist us in obtaining righteousness; but that *he of God is made unto us righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30.

By his death he hath delivered us from the condemnation of eternal death. In him we have been adopted by the heavenly Father to be his children and heirs. By his blood we are reconciled unto God. Protected and governed by him, we can never perish. Being actually incorporated in him, and received into God's kingdom, we are already made partakers of eternal life.

He is the Foundation of our salvation: in ourselves we are foolish and ignorant, but, by our fellowship with him, he is our light, and our wisdom; by nature we are impure, but he is our sanctification; we are weak and helpless to resist the devil, but he, unto whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, is our strength. We carry about us a body of death; but he is

our Life. In a word, he is the ground on which we stand, because all that he hath is ours; we have nothing in ourselves, but in him we have all things. . . .

Since our salvation is comprised entirely, and in all its parts, in Jesus Christ, let us be careful of transferring the least part of it to any other. Do we seek salvation? the very name of Jesus teaches us, that we have it in him. Do we want redemption? we obtain it through his sufferings and death. Are we afraid of the curse? his death on the cross secures us from it. In his offering we find the satisfaction made, of which we stand in need, and in his blood, the cleansing from our sins. Since the treasures of all good things are hid in him, we ought to receive them of his fullness alone, and thus enjoy the participation of them, without looking for any other source. Such as are not satisfied with him, and build their hopes upon this or the other thing, are highly criminal; and though they principally have their eyes directed towards him, yet they do in fact deviate from the straight way, by leading their thoughts partly to another object.

CALVIN.

The ground-work of all a Christian's hope and consolation is, that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, and Saviour of the world, one able to save to the utmost all that put their trust in him, so that every soul that finds itself lost, and not able to subsist nor abide the judgment of God, may repose their confidence in him, and lay the weight of their eternal welfare upon his death and sufferings, with assurance to find rest and peace in him to their souls. He is such a one as faith may triumph in, over the world, and all things beside. A believer may triumph in his victory, and in the faith of his victory, over hell and death, and the grave; may overcome personally, *for this is our victory over the world, even our faith.* And how could a soul conquer by faith, if he in whom it believes were not declared to be the Son of God with power? There is nothing so mean and weakly as faith in itself, it is a poor despicable thing of itself, and that it sees, and that it acknowledges. Yea, faith is a very act of self-denial, it is a renouncing of all help without and within itself, save only that which is laid on Christ Jesus; therefore it were the most unsuitable mean of prevailing, and the most insufficient weapon for gaining the

victory, if the object of it were not the strong God, the Lord Almighty, from whom it derives and borrows all its power and virtue, either to pacify the conscience, or to expiate sin, or to overcome the world. Oh consider, Christians, where the foundation of your hopes is situated. Is it in the divine power of our Saviour? If he who declared so much love and good-will to sinners, by becoming so low, and suffering so much, have also all power in heaven and earth, if he be not only man near us, to make for us boldness of access, but God near God, to prevail effectually with God, then certainly he is *a sure foundation laid in Zion, elect and precious*; he is an unmoveable Rock of Ages, whosoever trusts his soul to him shall not be ashamed. I am sure that many of you consider not this, that Christ Jesus, who was in due time born of the Virgin Mary, and died for sinners, is the eternal Son of God, equal to his Father in all glory and power. Oh how would this make the gospel a great mystery to souls, and the redemption of souls a precious and wonderful work, if it were considered! Would not souls stand at this anchor immoveable in temptation, if their faith were pitched on this sure foundation, and their hope cast upon this solid ground! O know your Redeemer is strong and mighty, and none can pluck you out of his hand, and himself will cast none out that comes. If the multitude of you believed this, you would not make so little account of the gospel that comes to you, and make so little of your sins which behoved to be taken away by the blood of God, and could be expiated by no other propitiation; you would not think it so easy to satisfy God with some words of custom, and some public services of form as you do; you would not for all the world deal with God alone without this Mediator: And being convinced of sin (if you believed this solidly, that he in whom forgiveness of sin and salvation is preached, is the same Lord God whom you hear in the Old Testament, who gave out the law, and inspired the prophets, the only begotten of the Father in a way infinitely removed from all created capacities) you could not but find the Father well satisfied in him, and find a sufficient ransom in his death and doings to pacify God, and to settle your consciences.

PROF. BINNING.

But that which is the chief excellency of our state is, that we not only depend upon the Word as revealing Jesus Christ, but by so doing we depend upon Jesus Christ as revealed in the Word: we are built upon that foundation, of which Jesus Christ Himself is the chief corner-stone, not Jesus Christ's Word. He is the Foundation of his Church in his own Person, and not by his Word only which he spake. He is Himself the chief corner-stone: he not only declared the way of God in truth, but was himself the way and the truth. In this capacity he stands alone, and bears up the pile of the spiritual building by his own strength.

Jesus Christ is the elect and precious corner-stone which God hath laid in Zion: though he is one which the builders rejected, he is laid for this purpose, that every trembling sinner who feels his own weakness and inability to stand alone before God, either on the score of merit or innate holiness, may come to it, and let all the weight of his salvation rest entirely upon it. He is permitted to depend upon the merits of Christ for his pardon and acceptance with God, and may expect to find in him all necessary grace and strength. *He that believeth in him shall not be confounded.* To him many have come, for he is a tried stone, and are builded together; and find him to be, not only the ground for their security, but also, as the corner-stone is in a building, the bond of their union.

But though it is contained in the Scriptures that *other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. iii. 11; that is, no foundation on which we can safely be built except him: yet mankind are ever rearing their respective superstructures on a different foundation: some build upon the presumptuous hopes of God's mercy; expecting to see the Lord without holiness; others are raising a fair fabric on the ground of their own righteousness: others are pleasing themselves with a motley building, which they have raised on two foundations, Christ and their own works: all which may stand for a while, and make a fair show during the momentary calm of God's forbearance; but will instantly crumble into dust, when his breath shall blow upon them. Now where so many are wrong and so few are right, how happy your lot to be in the latter number, by

having found the true foundation! How great your privilege, who have been taught to perceive that stone to be precious, which to others is *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient*; 1 Pet. ii. 8. REV. H. MARTYN.

God is only to be found in Christ.

As soon as we think of prying into the Godhead, our senses immediately fail us. Christ is set forth before our eyes as the living and express image of the invisible God. Why then should we vainly endeavour to fathom the mysteries of the Godhead, seeing that God provided for our infirmities, by showing himself near to us in the person of Jesus Christ? Let us rather, whenever the question relates to the government of the world, to the state of mankind, and the protection of heaven for our salvation, learn to fix our eyes on Christ Jesus alone, as in reality all power is given unto him. In his face we clearly see God the Father, who, without this, would be hidden and far from us.

Whoever honoreth not the Son, deprives God of that honor which of right belongs to him. Every man confesses, indeed, that God ought to be honored; nay, this natural, and as it were innate sentiment is so deeply rooted in our hearts, that no man dares openly to deny God the honor that is due to him. When men, however, seek God, out of the right way, their understanding leaves them. We shall not find the true God any where, but in Christ; nor can we show him that honor, which belongs to him, but *by kissing the Son*, Ps. ii. 12. *For, whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father*, 1 John ii. 23. Indeed, whenever the name of God is separated from Christ, it is in imagination only. Hence, let him, who is desirous of serving the true God acceptably, in no wise turn away from Jesus Christ. Since the Father hath made him to sit at his right hand, whoever imagines God without Christ, takes from him one half of himself. As soon as we separate our thoughts from Christ, we shall have idols of our own forming only; but in Jesus Christ there is nothing but what is divine, and which keeps us in fellowship with God.

CALVIN.

When thou art in hand with the Article of Justification, and considerest or dis-

putest with thyself, where that God is to be found which justifieth sinners, and receiveth them to grace: then look well to it, and take good heed, that thou takest notice of no other God, but only of that man, Christ Jesus: look that thou takest sure hold on him, and with thy heart remainest depending on him, and banish and expel from thee all cogitations and speculations of God's incomprehensible majesty; for, as Solomon saith, *He that searcheth after high things, to him they shall be too high*, Prov. xxv. This which I now speak I have by good experience, and I know that the same is true. But the seducing spirits that will deal with God without this man Christ, they believe me not, although Christ himself saith, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh to the Father, but through Me*. Therefore whosoever thou art, thou shalt find no other way to go to the Father without this Way, which is Christ; all other ways are misleading, and by-ways; thou shalt find no truth without Christ, but altogether hypocrisy and lies: thou shalt find no life without Christ, but everlasting death: therefore mark diligently that in any case—(if thou intendest to be justified before God, and wilt obtain grace, and when thou dealest with the Devil, with the Law, with Sin, and Death)—then, I say once again, look well that thou knowest no other God, but only that God which is also Man.

LUTHER.

Jesus Christ, having by his blessed incarnation, united the divine and human nature, has thus tempered the infinite majesty of God, which rendered him inaccessible to man, and placed him at so great a distance from us, as to prevent all communion with him. For what communion can there be between that Being, and dust; between the source of life, and death; between the Father of Spirits, and wretched flesh, which is but dust and ashes!

What condescension can be conceived equal to this, that God, who in his nature is so infinitely above us, hath vouchsafed not only to look down upon us in love, and spoken familiarly to us, as he did to the first man, conversing with him always as his lord and master! that he hath condescended not to put his word and promises only into the hands of man, in order to communicate them to us, as he did

formerly to the Israelites ; but that it also pleased him, that a divine Person should become man, and take upon him our nature, our miseries and infirmities ! This manner of tempering his majesty, and of condescending to our weakness, in order to stoop in some measure to us, is the most tender and most endearing that can be conceived ; for by this means God is become as accessible to us, as we possibly could desire.

REV. J. CLAUDE.

Christ is the All-sufficient Saviour, the All in All to Believers, who, by their union with Him, are complete and secure, receive their Spiritual nourishment, and all communications of God's Mercies and Blessings.

CONTEMPLATE, then, my soul, this sure, this everlasting foundation of thy hopes. What though, in ourselves, we are nothing but guilt and sin, God has appointed the way in which sin may be pardoned, and a sinner justified. Jesus has laid the sure foundation by his atoning sacrifice, his everlasting righteousness, and his complete redemption ; secured by his almighty power, and his eternal truth. If we look through the whole word of God, we shall see it continually witnessing to the glory of Jesus, and his all-sufficiency for the salvation of his people, the satisfaction of Jehovah in his work, and the blessedness of those who are in him, Acts iv. 12, 13. From the first promise to the last, all and each is founded upon him, and all of them are *yea and amen in Christ Jesus*. Therefore penitent sinners are continually directed to look to him, and their salvation is all his own work. In him his people shall be justified, Isa. liii. 4-6, 10-12. What security can the trembling sinner wish for more ! To look to Christ is, to concur with the design of God—to fulfil the commandment of God—to rest upon what God has laid for the purpose ; and to appear before God in Christ, is to be well-pleasing in his sight. While faith looks here, and rests here, it may confidently expect every promised blessing. Looking out of self, where there is nothing but guilt, it looks to the all-sufficiency of Jesus, where there is nothing but grace, and has the security of his promise. On whatever other base a sinner may rest his hope of security, it will not stand ; the false hope shall deceive him to his everlasting destruction, Isa. xxviii. 15-18.

There is no other way of effecting this but entering into the covenant of God in Christ Jesus. Let me, then, as a guilty penitent, fly hither, and believe the declaration of his love ; and, being *justified by faith, I shall have peace with God, through Jesus Christ*. . . . The great point in Christian experience and practice, is to be built up in Christ Jesus, for the foundation of our hope, and of every grace and gracious blessing. The source of every supply, and all the increase of the Christian life in its beauty, glory, and stability, is from him. And as we cleave to him in a stronger faith, dependence, and expectation, so will be the supply of grace and strength, of deliverance and victory, of sanctifying virtue, and abounding consolation. Not only are we directed to look to him at first, for the original communication of grace, but still we must be *looking unto Jesus*, in the Christian life, the Christian race, the Christian warfare : and in whatever we consider the spiritual life to consist, the spring, the supply, the vital efficacy is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and in him alone. If at any time we are led proudly to suppose, that we possess any inherent source of spiritual life within ourselves ; we are often left to ourselves, that we may discover our mistake, and by painful experience be taught what we still are, without the constant communications of his grace. Dull, lifeless, lukewarm, estranged from God, and, in our very duties and sacred exercises, unbelieving and unspiritual, we learn the unhappy effect of the withdrawal of the divine influences and favor, and the sad fruits of self-confidence and pride. To this perhaps the deepest falls of the best Christians may be primarily traced ; and an unholy self-dependence has issued in unholy conduct. But the humble believer, cleaving to God in Christ Jesus, possesses the sweet persuasion of his love, and the calm reliance of faith and hope ; and the innate virtue of the Redeemer, derived into the soul by faith, produces all the holy fruits of Christian obedience.

REV. W. GOODE.

This is the glorious grace, the joyful truth of the everlasting covenant. Such honor have all the saints of Jesus : his perfect righteousness is their clothing ; his almighty strength their protection. Who then shall condemn them ? what power can prevail against them ? O believer ! re-

joice in thy privilege. This is our triumph against every accusation, 'In Jesus I have righteousness.' This is our victory over every enemy, 'In Jesus I have strength.' Under the most discouraging views of my nature, as corrupt and sinful—my life and practice, as unrighteous—the condemnatory sentence of the law, though just—the accusations of Satan, though grievous—yet in my glorious covenant Head and representative I am '*made the righteousness of God*;' in his beloved Son, I am forever accepted. Under the most dejecting sense of our own weakness, to withstand corruptions, gain the mastery over sinful passions, and prevail against our enemies; though weak to perform any duty, insufficient to exercise any grace, unable to do the will of God, walk in his ways, and please him; yet ever, under all circumstances, the Spirit testifies of Jesus, 'he is our strength and righteousness.' All fulness is in him; and 'out of his fulness we receive grace for grace.' Though 'without Christ we can do nothing; yet, through Christ strengthening us, we can do all things.' Here is the mystery of faith. And this is the work of faith, to receive God's word and glory, and rejoice in what that testifies of the Saviour, who saith, *Abide in me*, John xv. 4. W. MASON.

Consider, then, fearful and fainting believer, and consider for thy comfort, that this precious atonement of Christ will reach as far as faith can reach, or hope desire; for Jesus is a High Priest, prevalent in intercession; Jesus was a sacrifice, infinite in merit, and everlasting in its consequences. If all the sins that ever were conceived in thought, or brought forth into act and deed, combined with all the practical ungodliness that ever was committed from Adam to this hour, were laid all together upon thee, the efficacy of Christ's blood is sufficient for the atonement of them all: and if he gave thee the grace of faith in his infinite atonement, thou wouldst be presented without spot or blemish before the throne of God. On the other hand, if thou didst never commit but one sin, and that sin only in thy thought; and if thou finally didst leave the world without faith in this great propitiation, that very little sin (as some might call it,) would suffice to sink thee down into a world of woe. AMB. SERLE.

The mutual love of God and the saints agree in this, that the way of communicating the issues and fruits of these loves, is only in Christ. The Father communicates no issue of his love unto us but through Christ; and we make no return of love unto him but through Christ; he is the treasure wherein the Father disposeth all the riches of his grace, taken from the bottomless mine of his eternal love, and he is the priest into whose hand we put all the offerings, that we return unto the Father. Thence he is first, and by way of eminency, said to love the Son; not only as his eternal Son, as he was the delight of his soul before the foundation of the world, Prov. viii. 30. but also as our Mediator, and the means of conveying his love to us; Matt. iii. 17. John iii. 33. v. 21. x. 17. xv. 9. xvii. 24. And we are said through him to believe in, and to have access to God. 1st. The Father loves us and *chooseth us before the foundation of the world*; but in the pursuit of that love, he *blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*; Eph. i. 3, 4. From his love, he sheds or pours out the holy Spirit richly upon us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; Tit. iii. 6. In the pouring out of his love, there is not one drop falls beside the Lord Christ. The holy anointing oil was all poured on the head of Aaron; and thence went down to the skirts of his clothing. Love is first poured out on Christ; and from him it drops as the dew of Hermon upon the souls of his saints. The Father will have him to have the pre-eminence in all things; Col. i. 18. *it pleased him, that in him all fulness should dwell*; ver. 19. *that of his fulness we might receive, and grace for grace*; John i. 16. Though the love of the Father's purpose and good pleasure, have its rise and foundation in his mere grace and will, yet the design of its accomplishment is only in Christ. All the fruits of it are first given to him; and it is in him only that they are dispensed to us. So that though the saints may, nay, do see an infinite ocean of love unto them in the bosom of the Father, yet they are not to look for one drop from him, but what comes through Christ. He is the only means of communication. Love in the Father, is like honey in the flower, it must be in the comb, before it be for our use. Christ must extract and prepare this honey for us. He draws this water

from the fountain (through union and dispensation of fulness), we by faith, from the wells of salvation that are in him. Furthermore, it is also true that our returns are all in him, and by him also. And well is it with us, that it is so. What lame and blind sacrifices should we otherwise present unto God! He bears the iniquity of our offerings, and he adds incense unto our prayers, Exod. xxviii. 38. Rev. viii. 3. John xiv. 6. Heb. x. 20-22. Our love is fixed on the Father, but it is conveyed to Him, through the Son of his love. He is the only Way for our graces, as well as our persons to go unto God; through him passeth all our desire, our delight, our complacency, our obedience.

DR. J. OWEN.

Christ is the channel of grace and mercy; through him are all the streams of mercy that flow from God to us, and all the returns of praise from us to God.

The purchase of all those mercies which Providence conveys to us, is by the blood of Christ; for not only spiritual and eternal mercies, but even all our temporal ones, are the acquisition of his blood. As sin forfeited all, so Christ restored all these mercies to us again by his death. Sin had so shut up the womb of mercy, that had not Christ made an atonement by his death, it could never have brought forth one mercy to all eternity for us. It is with him that God freely gives us all things; so that whatever good we receive from the hand of Providence, we must trace it to Christ, and when we receive it we must say, *It is the price of blood*. Now this is a most endearing consideration. Did Christ die that these mercies might live? Did he pay his invaluable blood to purchase these comforts that I possess? Oh what transcendent, matchless love was the love of Christ! If his life had not been so afflictive and sad to him, ours could not have been so sweet and comfortable to us: it is through his poverty that we are enriched. These sweet mercies that are born of Providence every day are the fruits of the travail of his soul. . . .

The continuation of all your mercies and comforts, outward as well as inward, is the fruit of his intercession in heaven for you. *As the offering up the Lamb of God a sacrifice for sin, opened the door of mercy at first; so his appearing before God as a lamb that had been slain, still keeps that*

door of mercy open, Rev. v. 6; Heb. ix. 24. *By his intercession, our peace and comforts are prolonged to us*, Zech. i. 12, 13. Every sin we commit would put an end to the mercies we possess, were it not for this: *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins*. Hence it is that he saves to the uttermost, to the last completing act, Heb. vii. 25. . . .

The covenant of grace, in which all your enjoyments are comprised, and by which they are secured, sanctified, and sweetened to you, is made in Christ and ratified by him betwixt God and you. Your mercies are all comprised in this covenant; *even your daily bread*, Psal. cxi. 5, as well as your justification, and other spiritual mercies. And this it is which sanctifies them, and gives them the nature of special and peculiar mercies. One such mercy is worth a thousand common mercies. And being sanctified and special mercies, they must needs be exceedingly sweet beyond all other mercies. On these accounts it was, that David so rejoiced in his covenant-interest, though laden with many afflictions, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. But now all this hangs entirely upon Christ. The New Testament is in his blood, 1. Cor. xi. 25. And whatever mercies you reap from that covenant, you must thank the Lord Jesus Christ for them. REV. J. FLAVEL.

To wind up all: My son, if ever thou look for sound comfort on earth and salvation in heaven, unglue thyself from the world and the vanities of it: put thyself upon thy Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ: leave not, till thou findest thyself firmly united to him; so as thou art become a limb of that body whereof he is head, a spouse of that husband, a branch of that stem, a stone laid upon that foundation. Look not, therefore, for any blessing out of him; and in, and by, and from him, look for all blessings. Let him be thy life; and wish not to live longer than thou art quickened by him. Find him thy wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption; thy riches, thy strength, thy glory.

Apply unto thyself all that thy Saviour is, or hath done.* Wouldst thou have the graces of God's Spirit? fetch them from his anointing. Wouldst thou have power

* Nier. Zanch. Loc. Com. 8. de Symbolo Apost.

against spiritual enemies? fetch it from his sovereignty. Wouldst thou have redemption? fetch it from his passion. Wouldst thou have absolution? fetch it from his perfect innocence: freedom from the curse? fetch it from his cross: satisfaction? fetch it from his sacrifice: cleansing from sin? fetch it from his blood: mortification? fetch it from his grave: newness of life? fetch it from his resurrection: right to heaven? fetch it from his purchase: audience in all thy suits? fetch it from his intercession. Wouldst thou have salvation? fetch it from his session at the right hand of Majesty. Wouldst thou have all? fetch it from him who is *one Lord, one God and Father of all; who is above all, through all, and in all*, Eph. iv. 5, 6.

BP. HALL.

Christ the Head of the Church.

HE, as the Head, guides and rules his church. He neither slumbereth nor sleepeth. He sees all the different departments of his government, and perfectly knows all those things which can be useful to it, and is able to supply them. He also knows all those things which can injure it, and has power to guard and protect it. He presides over all the conflicts which his members have to encounter, and crowns them with glorious victory. He is ever at hand to succour them, and to supply all their wants; insomuch that no danger is so pressing, which he could not avert, no mischief so great, which he could not remove, and no gift so precious which he could not procure for them. He is a Head possessed of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness; he knoweth all things; to him nothing is impossible; he seeth and disposeth of all things. From him alone the church derives all its life, motion, and spiritual feeling. He enlightens us with his light; he cherishes us with the warmth of his divine love; he purifies us by his Spirit; he renders us conformable unto himself: we grow up into him and by him. Believers, being in reality joined together in one, are enabled to assist each other considerably, according to the different callings with which God has honored them: but all their strength and energy depends on him, who is their Head, and without him the body would be nothing but a hideous carcass; and this shows the difference between the head of the human body and Jesus Christ. The head has

indeed some advantages above the body and the members, but it cannot subsist without them; for though the head directs the members, they must however support the head. But Jesus Christ would have subsisted for ever, though there never had been a single believer. It was his love, and not any necessity, that moved him to unite himself with us. As he does not become more powerful by the union with his members, so he would suffer no loss of power by their separation. We can do nothing without him: but he can do all things without us.

What a divine Head is this! who interests himself so tenderly in all the concerns of his body, that we can say, he shares equally with his members, both in their happiness, and in their afflictions. Although he is surrounded with glory, yet he is not insensible to the misery of his brethren. When we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and take in strangers, he assures us, that we feed Him; Him who, feeds all creatures; that we clothe Him who clotheth even the lilies of the field; and take Him in, who filleth the universe. When Saul was attempting to crush the church in its infancy, and went in search after the disciples of the Lord from Jerusalem to Damascus, Jesus complained so grievously of his cruelty, as if Saul would storm heaven to dethrone him: *Saul, Saul! why persecutest thou Me?*

Jesus Christ has been appointed the Head of his Church in a very peculiar manner, and different from that government which he exercises over the rest of the creation. He beholds all other creatures as his footstool, Ps. cx. 1.; and hath power to break them in pieces, and to destroy them. But as to the Church, he regards it as his own body, his flesh and bones, his spouse, whom he nourisheth and cherisheth with the utmost tenderness, whom he will make a partaker of his glory. His other creatures indeed perceive the effects of his justice, power, and goodness: but the church enjoys the sweetness of his mercy. He is lord and sovereign of the whole creation; but he is peculiarly the Saviour and Head of the Church.

What a difference is there between the first and the second Adam! The one, as well as the other, is a head: but the former has plunged us into perdition, the latter has saved us; the one has entailed death

upon us, the other gives us life; the one by his disobedience has sunk us into an abyss of misery, the other by his obedience and righteousness has procured us infinite blessings.

The Church of Jesus Christ is the most perfect of the works of his hands. It is his image; it bears his impression; it is his new heaven and his new earth; his new world; it is that work which has cost him more than all the rest, for he accomplished it at the expense of his own life; and he is still daily employed in beautifying and rendering it more perfect.

We may say in a certain sense, that the Church contributes to the completion of Jesus Christ: for, as the head, though the most eminent part of man, would be a useless part, if separated from the body; so we may say, in like manner, that Jesus Christ would not be a head, if he had not a body to guide and direct. He would indeed not be less happy in himself, but he would not be a head; and in this respect, he obtains this completion, by being united with the Church, and gathering together all his members. But it must always be remembered, that we do not use this language with reference to Jesus Christ, considered in himself: but as in communion with his believers, with whom he purposes to constitute a body, which even bears the name of Christ. (*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ*, 1 Cor. xii. 12.) Oh, what an honor for the Church, to be not merely called *the body of Christ*, but even, in some measure, to contribute to his completion! B. PICTET.

Vital Union between Christ and Believers.

THERE is a vital union, or a divine connexion between Christ and his people, which takes place at regeneration, when the soul is made to hear the voice of the Son of God and live, for the Son quickeneth whom he will. Hence the apostle says '*I live; yet not I, but Christ who liveth in me.*' To live, implies three things, all which in a spiritual sense every true Christian is the subject of; in consequence of Christ being their life, he is that to his church which a soul is unto a body, with which it is vitally connected. From living union with him ariseth spiritual sensation, animation, preservation. They feel the

burden of guilt, and are sensible of the plague of their own hearts. They are convinced of their wants and weakness, and are conscious of being in a condition both mean and miserable. They see their own deformity and Jehovah's beauty. Their ears are open to receive instruction; and the voice of God in his word, whether terrific or tender, makes deep and durable impressions on their minds. They have a taste for the things of religion, after which they hunger and thirst. To them Christ is precious: his name is an ointment poured forth, his beauty is as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon; yea, he is altogether lovely. All their spiritual sensations, whether painful or pleasurable, are in consequence of living union with Jesus; for prior to its commencement they were dead in sin, and destitute of every holy emotion and perception. Christian activity is entirely owing to Christ's animative influence. Through his Spirit, and all-sufficient grace, they serve with pleasure, or suffer with patience; they strive and war against sin, and wrestle with principalities and powers, over all which they are more than conquerors through him who hath loved them. Yea, they can do all things through Christ strengthening them, and without him they can do nothing. The principle of animation ever discovers an inclination to preserve its connexion with that which is animated by it: this is obvious not only in rational life, but even in animal likewise. So, Christ has always discovered an entire, infinite inclination to keep and preserve his people in connexion with himself. He influences them to love, and labor for, the meat which perisheth not. He alarms their fears that they may escape danger, and strengthens their faith that they may lay hold of eternal life, secures their love by fresh discoveries of divine beauties, and the suitableness of celestial objects to heaven-born souls. Thus he draws them in the paths of duty by the bands of love, and by the cords of a man. He is the Author of their preservation, in such a way as to prevent presumption, and secure their attention to appointed means, which Divine wisdom has connected with the desired end. He says he will never leave them, but will be with them always to the end of the world; and writes his law in their hearts, that they might not finally depart from him. He saves them, there-

fore, not contrary to their inclination, but with their free consent, and fervent desire. *He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Between Jesus and them, there is a oneness in perception, affection, interest, and end. As they are precious to him, so is he precious to them; the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. His interest is theirs, and theirs is his. He rejoiceth in the prosperity of his people, and they esteem Jerusalem, i. e. his cause on earth, above their chief joy; his revealed designs correspond with their real desires. The destruction of sin, and the perfection of purity, they long for. He gave his life for them, neither do they count theirs too dear to sacrifice on his behalf; their life therefore is in their hand, ready to be delivered up at their Saviour's call. They rejoice in Jesus on account of his mediatorial obedience, not only as it is their security from condemnation, but as it does infinite honor to Heaven's righteous law. What Christ has done intentionally, centres, and will ultimately terminate, in the vindication of God's moral government, and the eternal display of Jehovah's essential perfections, in all their native beauty, and infinite excellency, grandeur, and glory, that God, to whom sinners have an aversion, may appear and be acknowledged, not only by angels, but by men, as all in all. As influenced by grace, the true believer says, Oh, how I love thy law! I delight in the law of God after the inward man. Jehovah he admires and adores; and when he takes a solemn view of the great Eternal, whose glory dazzles angelic eyes, he is astonished, confounded, and lost, in pleasing wonder. He sinks into profound contempt of himself, and feels keen reflections on his criminal want of affection to and departures from a Being so infinitely deserving the supreme love of men and angels. But on the revival of hope, with humble reverence, and holy rapture, he sings, *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. He is my rock and fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength, my buckler, my salvation, and my high tower. In his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand are pleasures for evermore. Then shall I be satisfied, when I awake in his likeness.* Though conscious of meanness and demerit, his language now is, Will he plead against me with his great

power? No, but he will put strength into me. I know whom I have believed. He hath said, My grace shall be sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness. The Lord will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

As such souls freely give themselves unto the Lord, so he receives them graciously, and rejoiceth in them as his spouse, his property, and portion; it is his will, and their desire to be like him, and with him for ever, and for them to die is gain. Therefore, though shoals of professors perish, none who are possessors of his grace ever shall. Their internal life is eternal in its duration; for thus saith the Lord, *I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand*, John x. 28. *He that believeth on him is not condemned*, John iii. 18. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*, Rom. viii. 1. As there is no condemnation to such now, there never shall be any. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth, shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life*, John v. 24. *Whoso believeth on him shall not perish, but have eternal life*, John iii. 15, 16. *They shall never die; though they were dead, yet shall they live*, John xi. 25. *Who shall separate them from the love of Christ?* Rom. viii. 35. *Whose spirit is in them, as a well of water springing up into everlasting life*, John iv. 14. *He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life, but are dead while they live.* Those therefore who are vitally united to Christ, cannot lose their spiritual life while he maintains his own; for he hath said, *Because I live, ye shall live also.* Being bought by his precious blood, and kept by almighty power, they therefore may conclude with the apostle, *That when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory.*

REV. R. HALL.

This doctrine, therefore, of faith, must be taught in its purity; namely, That as a believer, thou art by faith so entirely united to Christ, that he and thou are made as it were one person. That thou canst not be separated from Christ; but always adhere

so closely to him as to be able to say with confidence, I am one with Christ; that is, Christ's righteousness, his victory, his life, death, and resurrection, are all mine. On the other hand, Christ may say, I am that sinner; the meaning of which is, in other words, his sins, his death, and punishment, are mine, because he is united and joined to me, and I to him. For by faith we are so joined together as to become one flesh and one bone. *We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, Ephes. v. 30.; so that, in strictness, there is more of a union between Christ and me than exists even in the relation of husband and wife, where the two are considered as one flesh, Ephes. v. 31. This faith, therefore, is by no means an ineffective quality; but possesses so great excellency, that it utterly confounds and destroys the foolish dreams and imaginations of the sophisters, who have contrived a number of metaphysical fictions concerning faith and charity, merits, and qualifications. These things are of such moment, that I would gladly explain them more at large, If I could.

LUTHER.

We are so closely united with Jesus Christ, and he with us, that we make but one and the same body; so that we may call all that is his, our own, and reciprocally, all that is ours, his. Thus, on the one hand, we may assuredly promise ourselves eternal life, since we can as little fail of obtaining the kingdom of heaven, as Jesus Christ himself, who is heir of it; and, on the other hand, we cannot be condemned for our sins; since he has absolved us, by having them imputed to himself, as if they had been his own. This is the admirable exchange which, according to his infinite mercy, he has been pleased to make with us. For, by taking upon himself our poverty, he has made us partakers of his riches; by bearing our infirmities, he has confirmed and established us by his strength; by clothing himself with mortality, he has bestowed on us his glorious immortality; by bearing the grievous burden of our sins, he has communicated his merits and righteousness unto us; by coming down on earth, he has opened to us the way which leads to heaven; in short, by becoming the Son of man, he has made us the children of God. . . We ought not to con-

sider Jesus Christ at a distance from us; but rather, as dwelling in us. For our hope of salvation from him, does not arise from his appearing to us afar off; but, having united us to his body, he makes us partakers both of his blessings and of his *own person*. Jesus Christ must not be separated from us, nor we from him; and we ought firmly to preserve the union by which he has joined us to himself. Jesus Christ is attached to us, not by an indissoluble tie only, but he unites himself to us more and more every day, so that, by an admirable union which passeth all thought, we become one plant and one body with him. CALVIN.

Behold what a happy change Jesus Christ has made with us. He took on him our nature, by his incarnation, and makes us partakers of his, by regeneration. By his incarnation he is become Immanuel, God with us; he hath dwelt among us, and our humanity was the tabernacle of his Divinity; but by regeneration, and by the union of his Spirit with our souls, we become *an habitation of God through the Spirit*, we are raised to the glory of the children of God; we become one with our Head; *we are in Christ*. By nature, we may say, we are in Adam; he is the principle of our life, the stock of the root of the human race, the Father from whom we derived our origin, who bore us all in his loins. But by grace we are in Christ. We are in Him, as the fountain of our new life, our Head, who has represented us, and who has given us all that we have of spiritual life. Oh, happy participation of nature, very different from the first! Oh, happy union with Christ! by which we are made one plant with him. We dwell in Christ, and Christ in us. As we say, that the members are in the body, to signify, they are united with it, that they make a part of it, that one spirit and one life animates both the whole body and its members; so are believers in Jesus Christ: they are all united with him, to make one and the same mystical body, with him. They are bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh; they live by the same life, they are quickened by the same Spirit which proceeds from the Saviour. As the branches live in the stock that shoots them forth, and in the root that bears them, so the believer lives in Jesus, but

in a much more intimate degree, from whom he receives the life of grace, sap, nourishment, and influence, by the participation of his Spirit, which flows from him upon us. We are in Jesus Christ.

D. SUPERVILLE.

AND, while thou art thus taken up, see if thou canst, without wonder and a kind of ecstasical amazement, behold the infinite goodness of thy God, that hath exalted thy wretchedness to no less than a blessed and indivisible union with the Lord of Glory: so as thou, who, in the sense of thy miserable mortality, mayest say *to corruption, thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister*; Job xvii. 14. canst now, through the privilege of thy faith, hear the Son of God say unto thee, *Thou art bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*; Gen. ii. 23. Eph. v. 30.

Surely, as we are too much subject to pride ourselves, in these earthly glories; so we are too apt, through ignorance or pusillanimity, to undervalue ourselves in respect of our spiritual condition: we are far more noble and excellent than we account ourselves.

It is our faith, that must raise our thoughts to a due estimation of our greatness; and must show us how highly we are descended, how royally we are allied, how gloriously estated. That only is it, that must advance us to heaven, and bring heaven down to us: through the want of the exercise whereof it comes to pass, that, to the great prejudice of our souls, we are ready to think of Christ Jesus as a stranger to us; as one, aloof off in another world, apprehended only by fits in a kind of ineffectual speculation, without any lively feeling of our own interest in him; whereas, we ought, by the powerful operation of this grace in our hearts, to find so heavenly an appropriation of Christ to our souls, as that every believer may truly say, 'I am one with Christ: Christ is one with me.'

Had we not good warrant for so high a challenge, it could be no less than a blasphemous arrogance, to lay claim to the royal blood of heaven: but, since it hath pleased the God of Heaven so far to dignify our unworthiness, as, in the multitude of his mercies, to admit and allow us to be *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. it were no other than an unthankful

stupidity, not to lay hold on so glorious a privilege, and to go for less than God hath made us.

BP. HALL.

Comforts arising from Union with Christ.

Now the comforts that arise unto us of our communion with Christ are exceeding great: for first, we have with him a communion of natures; he hath taken upon him ours, and hath communicated his nature unto us. Of the first (after a sort) all mankind may glory, forasmuch as Christ took not on the nature of angels, but the nature of man; yet if there be no more, the comfort is small: yea, the condemnation of man is the greater, that the Lord Jesus came unto man, in man's nature, and man would not receive him. But as for the godly, let them rejoice in this, that the Lord Jesus hath not only assumed our nature, but also made us *partakers of the divine nature*: before he assumed our nature, he sanctified it, and now having by his own Spirit joined us to himself, we may be out of doubt, he shall not cease till he hath sanctified us.

It is a notable comfort that the work of our perfect sanctification is not left unto us to do; the Lord Jesus hath taken it into his own hand to perform it, what then shall hinder it? *I am persuaded that he who hath begun this good work in you, will perform it, against the day of Jesus Christ.* He who at his pleasure turned water into wine; he who made the bitter waters to become sweet; he who makes the wilderness a fruitful land, and the barren woman to become the mother of many children; in a word, he who calls things which are not, and causeth them to be, is he not able to make sinners become saints? or shall he not perfect that work of the new creation which he hath begun in us? As for man he may beget children, but cannot renew their nature; he may marry a wife, but cannot change her conditions. But the Lord Jesus hath so loved his church, *that he shall make it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle.* He found us *polluted in our own blood*, naked and bare: but he hath washed us with the water of regeneration; he hath anointed us with his oil; and covered our filthy nakedness with his excellent ornaments, and by his Spirit of grace he changed us from glory to glory into his own image.

Let this be unto thee, O man of God, a fortress against thine infidelity: by that part which thou seest already done, learn to believe that which yet is undone. Is God become man? hath the God of glory appeared in the shape of a servant? hath he been crucified, dead, and buried in thy nature? Be thou strengthened in faith, give glory unto God, think it not impossible that the Lord can make thee, who art but the son of man, the son of God; that of a servant he can make thee a freeman; that from the grave he is able to raise thee unto glory, and clothe thee, who art mortal and corruptible, with the garments of incorruptibility and immortality. It is a harder thing (saith Chrysostom) in our judgment that God should become man, than that man should be made the son of God: a notable prop for our weak faith; we see that the son of God is become the son of Adam, and the son of Abraham, why then will we distrust, that we who are the sons of Adam, shall also be made the sons of God?

Secondly, we have in Jesus Christ a communion of goods: He hath taken upon him our sins, and the punishment thereof, he was wounded for our transgressions, and the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, and hath again communicated to us his righteousness and life; he hath not only given to us himself for our Saviour, but also whatsoever is his we may challenge as ours, by his own free gift. As the body, which is senseless in itself, enjoys the benefit of senses in the head, and rejoices therein as in her own: so we by our union with Christ enjoy, as ours, all that is his, though in ourselves we have no light, nor life, nor righteousness, by which we may stand before God, yet in him we have all these. In the corporal marriage there is a communion of goods; so long as the one is rich, the other cannot be poor: how much more holds this true in the spiritual marriage? *Seeing the Lord is our shepherd, what then shall we want?* the Lord Jesus, who is rich unto all that call upon him, is our Husband. He himself unto us is become all things: he is a propitiation for our sins; he is the light by whom we are translated from darkness; he is life, to quicken us that were dead in trespasses; he is the Way wherein we must walk; he is the door by which we must enter; he is the gar-

ment which we must put on; he is the food whereupon we must live; all these, and many more names (saith Cyril) are attributed to Christ, to assure us, though in ourselves we be void of all good, yet in him we shall be enriched with all spiritual graces needful for us.

And thirdly, we have by our union with Christ a communion of estates; he is touched with a compassion of all our infirmities, *in all their troubles he was troubled: he that touches you, touches the apple of mine eye*, Zach. ii. 8. In our natural body (saith the apostle) *if one member suffer, all suffer with it*, 1 Cor. xii. 16. much more is it so in the spiritual: if the foot in the natural body be trod upon, the head complains, why hurt you me? as if the injury were done unto it; but this feeling is far more lively in the mystical body: if Saul persecute the members in Damascus, the Head in heaven shall cry, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* Acts ix. 4. Oh that on the other part we were so lively and feeling members under our Head, that every prejudice to the glory of God, done by man, might grieve us more than if it were done unto ourselves! Such was David's feeling affection, that he protesteth, the rebuke of them who rebuked the Lord fell upon him; *Mine eyes* (saith he) *gush out rivers of tears, when I see the wicked will not keep thy law*, Psal. 119. But alas, the want of this sympathy with the head, and remanent members, evidently shows that this spiritual life is but weak in us.

Last of all, by our ingrafting into Christ we have this comfort, that we are sure of the benefit of perseverance, and that because (as the apostle saith) *we bear not the root, the root bears us*: our salvation depends not upon us, (for that were an unsure foundation;) it depends upon him; because we are in him, we grow and increase; yea, the older we be in Christ, the more we fasten our root and flourish, for *they who are planted in the courts of the Lord flourish in their old age, and bring forth fruit*. And whereas other branches may be pulled away from their stock, either by violence of wind, or force of the hands of men, or at least consumed by length of time, it shall not be so with them who are in Christ; they keep not him, but are kept by him: *Because I am not changed, therefore ye are not consumed, O ye sons of Jacob*: but as for those who are not

planted in Jesus, be who they will, they shall be pulled up, they shall not continue in honor. *The Princes of the earth, their breath shall decay, they shall return to their earth, and their thoughts shall perish; the Judges thereof shall be made as vanity, as though they were not planted nor sown: or as if their stock took no root in the earth. The Lord shall blow upon them, and they shall wither, the whirlwind shall take them away like stubble.* O silly glory of worldlings, which dieth to them, oftentimes before themselves, at least with them! Their beauties consume when they go from the house to the grave, and their pomp doth not descend after them. Only happy and sure is the estate of that man, who is in Christ: neither life, nor death, things present, nor things to come, shall separate him from the love of God.

BP. COWPER.

Infinite Value of Christ as our Friend.

That we are creatures wholly dependent, frail, ignorant, exposed, and unable to protect ourselves or provide for our interests, needs neither proof nor illustration. To us futurity is all blank. Between our present existence and the approaching vast of being, hangs a dark and impenetrable cloud. What is beyond it no human eye is able to discern, and no human foresight to conjecture. There, however, all our great concerns lie, and are every moment increasing in their number and importance.

There we shall enjoy the exquisite emotions and the high dignity of immortal virtue, the pure pleasures of a serene, self-approving mind, the eternal interchange of esteem and affection with the 'general assembly of the first-born,' and the uninterrupted favor of God in the world of joy; or we shall suffer the unceasing anguish of a guilty, self-ruined soul, the malignity of evil men and evil angels, and the wrath of our offended Creator, in the regions of woe. Between these infinitely distant allotments there is no medium, no intervening state, to which those who fail of final approbation can betake themselves for refuge. When, therefore, we bid adieu to this world, we shall meet with events whose importance nothing but omniscience can estimate, to us utterly uncertain, and utterly beyond our power.

Nay, the present moment, and every moment when present, is fraught with consequences incapable of being estimated by

any finite understanding. On time eternity hangs. As we live here, we shall live hereafter. If our time be well employed, and our talents well used, it will be well with us in the end. But if we abuse both here, it will be ill with us hereafter. The present moment is important, chiefly as it affects those which are future; begins or strengthens an evil or virtuous habit, depraves or amends the soul, hardens or softens the heart, and contributes in this way to advance us towards heaven, or towards hell. There is no man who is not better or worse to-day, by means of what he thought, designed, or did yesterday. The present day, therefore, is not only important in itself, as a season for which we must give an account, but because of the influence which it will have on the events of the morrow. Thus circumstanced, frail, irresolute, wandering, wicked, exposed to immense dangers, and yet capable of immense enjoyments, how infinitely desirable is it that we should have such a Friend as Christ. In his mind are treasured up all the means of happiness, which we need, the immense power, knowledge, and goodness, the unchangeable truth, faithfulness, and mercy which, and which only, can provide and secure for us immortal blessings, or preserve us from evils which know no end. In all places He is present, over all things he rules with an irresistible dominion. No being, no event, can be hidden from his eye. No enemy, however insidious, or however powerful, can escape from his hand. His disposition is written in letters of blood on the cross. He who died that sinners might live, he who prayed for his murderers, while imbruing their hands in his blood, can need, can add no proofs of his compassion for men. This glorious Redeemer is also *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. Such a friend to man as he was when he hung on the cross, he will be throughout eternity; and to every one, who sincerely desires an interest in his good-will, he will manifest his friendship in an endless succession of blessings.

While we wander through the wilderness of life, amid so many wants, how desirable must it be to find a friend able and willing to furnish the needed supplies! Amid so many enemies and dangers, how desirable must it be to find a friend, able and willing to furnish the necessary protection! Amid so many temptations, to watch over us!

Amid so many sorrows, to relieve us; in solitude, to be our companion; in difficulties, our helper; in despondence, our support; in disease, our physician; in death, our hope, resurrection, and life! In a word, how desirable must it be to find a friend who, throughout all the strange, discouraging state of the present life, will give us peace, consolation, and joy, and cause all things, even the most untoward and perplexing, to *work together for our good*.

On a dying bed especially, when our flesh and our hearts must fail of course, our earthly friends yield us little consolation, and no hope, and the world itself retires from our view, how delightful will such a friend be! Then the soul, uncertain, alone, hovering over the form which it has so long inhabited, and stretching its wings for its flight into the unknown vast, will sigh and pant for an arm on which it may lean, and a bosom on which it may safely recline. But there Christ is present, with all his tenderness and all his power. With one hand he holds the anchor of hope, and with the other he points the way to heaven.

In the final resurrection, when the universe shall rend asunder, and the elements of this great world shall rush together with immense confusion and ruin, how supporting, how ravishing will it be, when we awake from our final sleep, and ascend from the dust in which our bodies have been so long buried, to find this glorious Redeemer *re-fashioning our vile bodies like unto his glorious body*, and re-uniting them to our minds, purified and immortal! With what emotions shall we arise, and stand, and behold the Judge descend *in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels!* With what emotions shall we see the same unchangeable and everlasting Friend placing us on his right hand in glory and honor, which kings will covet in vain, and before which all earthly grandeur shall be forgotten! With what melody will the voice of the Redeemer burst on our ears, when he proclaims, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!* How will the soul distend with transport, when, accompanied by *the church of the first-born*, and surrounded by *thrones, principalities, and powers*, it shall begin its flight towards the highest heavens, to meet his *Father and our Father, his God and our God!* What an internal heaven will dawn

in the mind, when we shall be presented before the throne of Jehovah; and, settled amid our own brethren in our immortal inheritance and our final home, behold all our sins washed away, our trials ended, our dangers escaped, our sorrows left behind us, and our reward begun, in that world where all things are ever new, delightful, and divine!

At these solemn and amazing seasons, how differently will those unhappy beings feel who on a death-bed find no such friend; who rise to the resurrection of damnation; who are left behind, when the righteous ascend to meet their Redeemer; who are placed on the left hand at the final trial; and to whom in the most awful language which was ever heard in the universe, he will say, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!*

DR. DWIGHT.

‘I may be faint and weary (says the believer); but my God cannot. I may alter and fluctuate, as to my frames; but my Redeemer is unchangeably the same. I might utterly fail and come to nothing, if left to myself; but I cannot be so left to myself; for the Spirit of Truth hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*. He will renew my strength, either by changing my weakness into strength, or by enduing me with his own power. He is wise to foresee and provide for all my dangers: he is rich to relieve and to succour me in all my wants: he is gracious to hear and to answer all my prayers: he is omnipotent to deliver and defend me from all my enemies: he is faithful to perfect and perform all his own promises: he is eternal and immortal, to bless my poor depending soul with eternal blessedness and immortality. O what a great and glorious Saviour for such a mean and worthless sinner! O what a bountiful and graciously indulgent Friend for such a base and insignificant rebel! What, what am I, when I compare myself, and all I am of myself, with what I can conceive of my God, and of what he hath kindly promised even to me! What a mystery am I to myself, to angels, to men! A worm of earth to be like a star of heaven; a corruptible sinner to be an incorruptible saint; a rebel to be made a child; an outlaw to become an heir; a deserter of hell to be an inheritor of heaven; a strong hold of the devil to be changed into a

temple of God; an enemy and a beggar to be exalted to a throne, to be in friendship with God, one with Christ, a possessor of his Spirit, and of all this honor, happiness, and glory, for evermore; and all without any right to any one thing on my part, but the miseries of the lowest hell! O what manner, and what matter, of love is this! Lord, take my heart, my soul, my all! I can render thee no more; and I would render thee no less. It is, indeed, a poor return. My body and soul are but *two mites*; and yet (glory be to thee!) thou who didst esteem those of the poor widow, wilt not despise these of mine. Lord, they are thine own too; and I can only give thee what is thine! I melt with gratitude; and even this gratitude is thy gift. O take it, and accept both it and me in thyself, which is all my salvation and all my desire, for ever and ever!

AMB. SERLE.

There is no rest or consolation for the Soul in life or in death, and no support under trials and afflictions, or convictions of sin, but in Christ.

ALL the sufferings and distresses of this world are not able to destroy the happiness of a Christian, nor to diminish it; yea, they cannot at all touch it; it is out of their reach. If it were built on worldly enjoyments, then, worldly privations and sufferings might shake it, yea, might undo it: when those rotten props fail, that which rests on them must fall. He that hath set his heart on his riches, a few hours can make him miserable. He that lives on popular applause, it is almost in any body's power to rob him of his happiness; a little slight or disgrace undoes him. Or, whatsoever the soul fixes on of these moving unfixed things, pluck them from it, and it must cry after them, 'Ye have taken away my gods!' But the believer's happiness is safe, out of the reach of shot. He may be impoverished, and imprisoned, and tortured, and killed, but this one thing is out of hazard; he cannot be miserable; still, in the midst of all these, he subsists a happy man. If all friends be shut out, yet the visits of the Comforter may be frequent, bringing him glad tidings from Heaven, and communing with him of the love of Christ, and solacing him in that. It was a great word for a heathen to say of his false accusers, 'Kill me they may, but they cannot hurt

me.' How much more confidently may the Christian say so! Banishment he fears not, for his country is above; nor death, for that sends him home into that country.

The believing soul having hold of Jesus Christ can easily despise the best and the worst of the world, and defy all that is in it; can share with the apostle in that defiance which he gave, *I am persuaded that neither death nor life shall separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Rom. viii. 39. Yea, what though the frame of the world were a dissolving, and falling to pieces! This happiness holds, and is not stirred by it; for it is built upon that Rock of eternity, that stirs not, nor changes at all.

ABP. LEIGHTON.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and goodness of God! who found means to display at once his justice and his mercy, and to forgive sin, in punishing it! O the infinite love of the Father, *who so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son!* O the infinite love of the Son, who so loved his enemies, that he gave himself up to the most cruel death, to give them life! O the infinite love of the Holy Spirit! who loved mankind so highly, as to make known unto them this glorious gospel, and to seal in their hearts the promises of God through faith in Jesus Christ!

This, then, is the only ground of the peace of the soul, and contentment of the mind, to be confidently assured, that *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, who took upon himself our sins, bore the punishment due to them, and in exchange gave to us his righteousness, by which we are justified before God. This is the sum of the whole gospel, and the sole consolation of believers, Rom. v. 1.

Without this assurance, all moral precepts, and all philosophical arguments, must fail to set the mind at rest.

P. DUMOULIN.

Be sure that you think of and consider Christ as he is held forth in the gospel. We are very apt to have mis-thoughts of Christ. As Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, so he would transform Christ before you into an angel of darkness. But the Scripture holds him forth

under such relations as make him very amiable, very lovely, unto poor sinners. Are you accused by Satan, the world, and your own conscience? He is called your Advocate. Are you ignorant? He is called the Prophet. Are you guilty of sin? He is called a priest; the High Priest. Are you afflicted with many enemies, inward and outward? He is called a king; the King of kings. Are you in straits? He is called your *Way*. Are you hungry and thirsty? He is called the *Bread* and *Water of Life*. Are you afraid you shall fall away and be condemned at the last? He is our *second Adam*; a public person; in whose death we died; and in whose satisfaction we are satisfied. As there is no temptation, nor affliction, but some promise or other doth especially suit it; so there is no condition but some name, some title, some attribute of Christ, is especially suitable thereto. And as you should not look on Christ, but in reference to your condition; so you are not to look upon your condition alone, but with Christ's attribute suitable thereto. If you look upon Christ's attribute of love, without your condition, you may presume; if on your condition, without Christ's attribute of love, you may despair: think on both together, and you will not be discouraged.

REV. W. BRIDGE.

Conscience, when awakened by the terrors of the Lord, is like a raging, tempestuous sea. It works, and it is not in the power of any creature to quiet it. Spiritual terrors, as well as spiritual consolations, are not known till felt. O, when the arrows of the Almighty are shot into the spirit, and the terrors of God set themselves in array against the soul; when the venom of those arrows drink up the spirits, and those armies of terrors charge violently and successively upon it, as in Job vi. 4, what creature then is able to stand before them? Even God's own dear children have felt such terrors as have distracted them; Psal. lxxxi. 15. Conscience is the seat of guilt. It is like a burning glass; it contracts the beams of the threatenings, twists them together, and reflects them on the soul, until it is on fire. If *the wrath of the king be like the roaring of a lion*, then what is the Almighty's wrath? It is *burning wrath*, Job xix. 11; *tearing wrath*, Psal. l. 22; *surprising wrath*, Job xx. 23; and *abiding wrath*,

Job iii. 36. In this case no creature can relieve: all are physicians of no value. Some under these terrors have thought hell more tolerable, and have thrust themselves out of the world into it, to avoid these gnawings. Yet Jesus Christ can quickly calm these spiritual waves also, and hush them with a word; yea, he is the Physician, and no other. It is the sprinkling of his blood, which, like a cooling fomentation, allays these heats within. That blood of sprinkling speaks peace, when all others have practised on the soul to no purpose; and the reason is, because he is a Person in whom God and man, justice and mercy, meet and kiss each other.

Can none appease a troubled conscience but Christ? Then learn, O my soul, to understand, and daily more and more to savor that glorious name, even Jesus, who delivers not only from the wrath to come, but from that which is felt here also. O, if the foretaste of hell be so intolerable; if a few drops, let fall on the conscience in this life, be so insufferable, what is it to have all the vials poured out to eternity, when there shall be nothing to divert, mitigate, or allay it?

Here men have somewhat to abate their terrors, some hopes of mercy, at least a possibility: but there is none there. O my soul, how art thou loaded with guilt! and what wouldst thou be, should God arouse that sleepy lion in thy bosom! My condition is not at all the better because my conscience is quiet. The day is coming when it must awake, and will lighten and thunder terribly within me, if I flee not to Christ before. O Lord, *who knoweth the power of thy wrath?* O let me not carry this guilt out of the world with me, to maintain those everlasting flames. Let me give no sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eye-lids, till I feel the comfort of that blood of sprinkling, which alone speaketh peace.

REV. J. FLAVEL.

The doctrines of the gospel are to the weary and heavy-laden, soft as the dew on the tender herb, and refreshing as copious showers to the earth when parched with heat. They present, in the blood of Jesus, a balm that heals the wounded conscience, and that dispels all its anxious fears; that turns disquietude into peace, and fills the soul with blooming hope, and with joy unspeakable. Ask

that once disconsolate mourner, who saw himself exposed to the avenging hand of heaven, who felt his sins a burden too heavy for him to bear, and whom law-terrors or Satan's fiery darts had driven almost if not altogether to the brink of despair; ask him, I say, what was it that made his soul the seat of tranquillity and consolation, that changed the shadow of death into the light of the morning, and clothed him with the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; and he will tell you, that it was a sight of Jesus crucified, revealed to the eye of faith. Beholding the handwriting of the law nailed to the cross, and the sword of justice sheathed in the heart of him who died on it as a Surety; finding it written, that *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—that his blood cleanseth from all sin—and that he will cast out none that come to him*, the Lord gave him power to set his seal to the testimony, and he came with all his guilt and wants and unworthiness, and he found Jesus true to his word, and mighty to save.

He lives now a monument of his mercy, to proclaim the riches of his grace, and to declare to others what he knows in his own conscience, that the Gospel is the sweetest sound on this side heaven, to oppressed and despairing sinners, and that Christ Crucified is all in all to them that believe.

DE COURCY.

When the power or declaration of God's fiery law strikes like the burning beams upon the conscience; when guilty fears distress the mind; when the fiery darts of temptation, of raging lusts and passions, disallowed, harass and torment the soul; when continued affliction, trial, and sorrow, have exhausted the spirit; how refreshing the application of his grace, how sweet that peace which he speaks to the conscience, and enables faith to realise, when, *being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ*. The freedom and sovereignty of saving grace, the fulness and perfection of redeeming love, the faithful promises of pardoning mercy, the discovery of a reconciled God in Christ Jesus, afford a sweet satisfaction, calm the conscience, allay the fears of guilt, cool the rage of temptation and of lusts, and restore to the exhausted spirit

the confidence of faith and the joy of salvation. The wells of consolation are opened, the river flows which makes glad the city of our God, the dry and thirsty soul rejoices, faith receives the blessing, and praise returns the glory to its Source. In the midst of all those troubles of life which exhaust the faith and patience of the believer, here alone he finds relief, and here he finds an all-sufficiency. . . .

When we contemplate the Lord Jesus Christ in the character of a Wall of Fire, Zech. ii. 5, we must view it as referring to that abounding grace, whereby he has removed the wrath and secured the favor of a covenant God, and by which he for ever shelters the believer from the painful apprehension and dread of falling under it. This is the security against sin and guilt, against conscious fears, against the thunder of the holy law, against all the accusations and attempts of the enemy, and the horrors of deserved judgment.

The God of truth and holiness, within this sacred enclosure of his covenant engagements, is beheld *as the God of all grace, who can make all grace abound towards us, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus*. This is the first view that brings peace to the guilty sinner: grace, abounding grace, in the Person and work and characters of the Saviour. This only affords consolation, and removes the renewed apprehension of guilt and sin from the mind of the believer. The grace of Jesus stands like an impenetrable wall between the guilty penitent and the arrows of vindictive justice, and is a hiding-place from the wind, and the covert from the storm, &c. Beneath its shadow we behold only the face of him *who pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage; who retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy*; who will perform the truth and mercy which he has promised (see Mic. vii. 18, 19); and change the frowns of indignation for the smiles of love, the curse of wrath for the blessings of salvation. The abounding grace of Jesus secures my soul from fear, and satisfies me, in exercising faith upon his promise, with the confidence of peace and safety.

REV. WM. GOODE.

SECTION IV.—OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

Personality of the Holy Spirit.

CHRIST is born, the Spirit is his forerunner; Christ is baptised, He bears his testimony; Christ is tempted, he leads him away; Christ works miracles, he is with him; Christ ascends, he succeeds. What is so great and divine that he cannot do? What is so divine a name, except that of unbegotten and begotten, that he may not be called by it? He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Mind of Christ, the Spirit of the Lord, and himself Lord, the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of liberty, the Spirit of wisdom and prudence, of counsel and strength, of knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord: As the efficient cause of all these, he fills all things with his essence; contains all things, fills the world, and is greater than the world, greater in power and energy than the world can comprehend: He is good, righteous, and Truth by nature, not by gift; he sanctifies, and is not sanctified; he measures, but is not measured; he gives, but does not receive; he fills, but is not filled; he contains, but is not contained; he knows and teaches all things; blows where he will; is angered, tempted; is the Spirit of light and life, who builds temples, and dwells in them as God: he does all things that God himself does; he appeared as cloven tongues of fire; he distributes his gifts, made apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers; he is almighty, all-seeing, penetrating into all spirits at the same moment of time, though far dispersed from each other: which plainly shows that he is limited to no space.

GREGORY NAZIENZEN.

All is by the guidance of the Holy Spirit that those who wandered are directed, the wicked are converted, the weak are strengthened. He, the right Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the princely Spirit, rules, perfects, dwells in our souls, and suffers not those in whom he dwells, to err, to be corrupted, or to be overcome. He perfects those whom he has taught, those whom he possesses, and whom he has guided, with the sword of most powerful truth. He washes away sins, justifies the ungodly, heals discord, binds strongly with the bond of love, raises us up to heaven, and freeing us from the vanities of this world, makes us heirs of

the heavenly kingdom; of which this is the chief happiness, that this body, by spiritual influences, converses with angels; nor shall there be any more the appetites of flesh and blood, but the fulness of God is known, and the Spirit dwells in them.

CYPRIAN.

1. He appeared in a visible shape, as at the baptism of Christ, in the form of a dove, Matt. iii. 16; and in the day of Pentecost in the form as of cloven tongues of fire sitting on the Apostles, Acts ii. 3.

To assume a visible shape, belongs not to attributes or to accidents, but to Persons. One could not without absurdity relate as an historical fact that the justice or compassion of God, or any other perfection, had presented itself in a bodily form. Nor ought it to be retorted that accidents and qualities are obvious to the eye, and yet have no subsistence by themselves. For although such accidents and qualities fall immediately under the notice of sense, they always imply some person or thing in which they inhere. Under that visible form then something must have subsisted, which the text asserts to have been the Holy Spirit, and expressly distinguishes from the Persons of the Father and the Son, at the baptism of our Saviour. Nor can it be said that the fiery tongues are to be limited in their signification to the gifts of the Holy Spirit; for the text plainly distinguishes the Spirit from his gifts; *They began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit* (with which they were filled) *gave them utterance.*

2. The Scriptures make mention of transgression against the Holy Spirit. For instance, the Israelites are said to have provoked him, Isa. lxiii. 10. Blasphemy against him is declared to be an unpardonable sin, Matt. xii. 31, 32. Ananias and Sapphira are said to have lied unto the Holy Ghost, and died immediately in consequence, Acts v. 3.

Now as God alone is the object of worship, it follows that against God alone, properly and ultimately, sin can be committed. And as blasphemy against the Father and the Son supposes them to be Persons, we must infer the like of the Holy Spirit, from the mention of blasphemy against *Him*. In fact, the argument here is peculiarly decisive, inasmuch as this

latter species of blasphemy is pronounced to be by far the most heinous, as being both *in this world, and also in the world to come*, i. e. for ever (according to St. Mark's interpretation) unpardonable. Unless the Holy Spirit were a Person, this could not be said. For though some things in Scripture are said to be *evil spoken of*, (or, as it is in the Greek, *blasphemed*,) which are not persons;—as *our good*, Rom. xiv. 16; *doctrine*, 1 Tim. vi. 1; *the word of God*, Tit. ii. 5; *the way of truth*, 2 Pet. ii. 2; yet it is easy to see these things are only spoken of as blasphemed relatively to God. If our good be evil spoken of, God, from whom it proceeded, is offended—if the evangelical *word* or *doctrine*, God the Author of it is insulted. But blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is described as direct and absolute impiety: for all blasphemy reflects upon God, but this blasphemy is distinguished from blasphemy against the Father and the Son, therefore the one is not included in the other: but all blasphemy reflects upon God, therefore the Holy Ghost is himself perfectly and Personally God.

3. A very clear distinction is frequently made in Scripture between the Holy Spirit and his gifts. And why did the Scripture thus carefully distinguish, if the Holy Spirit himself be nothing more than a gift of God? The gifts of the Spirit are indeed sometimes called simply *the Spirit*; but in other passages he is plainly distinguished from them as their Author and Efficient Cause. *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, &c., by the same Spirit. All these things worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will*, 1 Cor. xii. 4—11. And lest we should think the Spirit to be a mere energy or power of God, belonging to him in the manner of an attribute; the Scriptures distinguish *power* from *spirit*, as in Luke iv. 14. *He returned in the power of the Spirit*, Acts i. 8. *Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you*: where power denotes the effect, and *Spirit* the cause or principle: that is to say, a Person possessed of power which he communicates to others. TURRETINE.

That the Holy Ghost is a *Person*, and not an *emanation*, a *virtue*, or some thing

from God, which is not God, will appear from the following, among many other texts of Scripture.—He *creates* and *gives life*, Job xxxiii. 4; is seen descending *in a bodily shape*, Luke iii. 22; commands Apostles, Acts viii. 29. and xi. 12; lifts up an apostle through the air by his own power, v. 39; sends messengers, Acts xix; appoints ministers in the church, Acts xx. 28; calls apostles, Acts xiii. 2; bestows gifts, Heb. ii. 4; speaketh to the churches, Rev. ii. 7; spake by the prophets, Acts xxviii. 15. 2 Pet. i. 21; speaketh *expressly*, 1 Tim. iv. 1; renews his people, Titus iii. 5; helpeth infirmities, Rom. viii. 26; maketh intercession, *ibid.*; reveals mysteries, Eph. iii. 5; searcheth all things, 1 Cor. ii. 10; teacheth all things, John xiv. 26; guideth into all truth, John xvi. 13; beareth witness in earth and heaven, Rom. viii. 16. 1 John v. 6; pronounceth words of blessing, Rev. xiv. 13; testifies of Christ, John xv. 26; glorifies Christ, John xvi. 14; is *another Comforter*, distinct from Christ, John xiv. 16; hath a *mind* of his own, Rom. viii. 27; hath a *will* of his own, 1 Cor. xii. 11; hath a *power* of his own, Rom. xv. 13; hath worship performed in his name, together with the Father and Son, Matt. xxviii. 19; hath a temple for his worship, 1 Cor. vi. 15; abides with his people for ever, John xiv. 16; and, by no people is blasphemed, but upon the peril of damnation, Matt. xii. 31.

Each of these Scriptures (and much more all together) is sufficient to demolish that unscriptural and absurd opinion of the Socinians and others, which treats the Holy Spirit of God as an effusion separate from God, consequently, as something created by God; and, therefore, something not of his nature or in it. It was the saying of a good man, that “the Devil may pervert Scripture, but he cannot answer it.” But the above texts, to which many more may be added, are so positive and direct in proof of the Spirit's *personality*, that, able as the Devil is in sophistry, they seem to defy his wiles upon this point, and are as convincing to faith, as any mathematical demonstrations can possibly be to sense. AMB. SERLE.

Divinity of the Holy Spirit.

THE Holy Spirit can be most clearly proved to be not only a Person, but a Divine Person, by the four arguments which

likewise prove the divinity of Christ : viz. because there are attributed to him the names, the attributes, the works, and the honor of God.

I. The Names. What is spoken of Jehovah of hosts, is applied to the Holy Spirit. *Well spake the Holy Ghost to Esaias, saying, Go to this people, &c.* And he who is called the Spirit of God is also directly called God and the Rock of Israel. In the same manner Ananias is said to have lied unto God, because he lied to the Holy Spirit; and thus the faithful are said to be temples of the living God, because they are temples of the Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in them. *Know ye not that your body is the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* 1 Cor. iii. 16. and vi. 19. Now as the terms Temple and Divinity are correlative, he whose temple we are called can be no other than God. Nor should this be understood in mere reference to his presence and habitation: for every inhabited place is not therefore a temple, and we are never called Temples of the Divine word, which ought nevertheless to dwell in us abundantly. But a temple has a necessary relation to *his* worship to whom it was erected: whence Augustine observes: 'If it were impious to build a temple to a creature, must not he be very God to whom indeed we do not build a temple, but are ourselves his temple?'

II. Divine Attributes belong to him: 1. *Eternity*, see Hebrews ix. 14; the *Eternal Spirit*. 2. *Omnipresence and Immensity*, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?* Psal. cxxxix. 7. 8. *The Holy Ghost dwelleth in you*, 1 Cor. iii. 16; not only by his energy, but really, since he is as God is in his temple. 3. *Omniscience*. *He searches the deep things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10; not as empowering us to search: for indeed it belongs not to us to search the depths of God: we should be overwhelmed with his glory. But thus to search is the very nature of the Holy Spirit, since he is said to be concerned with what belongs to God, just as the spirit of a man is concerned with what belongs to the man when by his own reflex act he examines his own secret mind. And to this conclusion we are led by the apostle's plain intention, which is, to prove that only the omniscient and all-searching Spirit of God can certainly reveal to us the things which God has prepared for those who love him, which other-

wise neither eye hath seen nor ear heard, nor have they entered into the heart of man, v. 9. But he is said to search, not by making inquiry, which would imply doubt and imperfection, but by penetrating, as God is said to *search the reins and the heart*. To the same purpose is it said that he declares things to come, John xvi. 13, which only belongs to God, and, 2 Pet. i. 21, that he spake by the prophets. 4. *Omnipotence*. He is called the 'power of the Highest.' *He is the quickening Spirit*, 1 Cor. xv., *who quickens our mortal bodies*, Rom. viii. 11.

III. The Works of God are attributed to him: 1. Natural works, as Creation, Gen. i. 2. Preservation and government, Psal. civ. 30. The performance of miracles, Mat. xii. 28. 1 Cor. xii. 4. 2dly, Works of grace. The Conception of Christ, Luke i. 35. The anointing and mission of Christ, Isa. lxi. 1. Forgiveness of sin and regeneration, 1 Cor. vi. 11. John iii. 5. The government of the Church, Acts xiii. 2. and xv. 28. and xx. 28. The prediction of events, John xvi. 13. Acts xi. 28. The conferring of gifts, 1 Cor. xii. 7. Illumination, Eph. i. 17, 18. Sanctification, 2 Thess. ii. 13. and 1 Pet. i. 2. The raising of the dead, Rom. viii. 11.

IV. Divine honor is attributed to him. We are baptised in his name no less than in the Father's and the Son's. Of him we implore grace and peace and every other blessing, no less than of the Father and the Son, 2 Cor. xiii. 13. and Rev. i. 4. where grace and peace are implored of *the Seven Spirits who are before the throne*. For the Holy Spirit is thus described, not in regard to his personal nature, which is one and undivided, but with regard to the sevenfold, i. e. the manifold diversity of gifts which he pours forth upon the faithful: and the number Seven is employed, not only on account of its supposed completeness, but in allusion to the seven churches to which the apostle writes, to intimate, as it were, that he would bestow himself as largely upon them, (such is the abundance of his gifts,) as if the whole Spirit were given to each of the churches. Nor can it be said that by the title of Seven Spirits is intended, not a Person, but only a means through which the apostle signifies that grace and peace proceed from the Father; for he implores grace of the Seven Spirits in the same manner as of the Father, evidently considering them as a prin-

ciple and a cause. Thus, inasmuch as we are the temple of God, St. Paul concludes that we should glorify God in our body and our spirit, which are God's.—What God? In truth, the God whose temple we are. Not that he excludes the Father and the Son; but in reference to the economy of the Persons, he particularises the Holy Spirit, who is glorified by invocation. Whence, Acts iv. 24, 25., the Spirit who speaks by the prophets is invoked by the church: *Lord, thou art the God who hast made heaven and earth, who spakest by the mouth of thy servant David.* Agreeably to which authority the ancient church likewise always invoked him in the hymn to the Holy Spirit: 'Creator Spirit, come!' and in the Doxology, to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, &c.

It remains that we obviate certain objections.

1. Though the Scriptures rarely make mention of adoration and homage to the Holy Spirit, we should very improperly argue from hence that he is not equally adorable with the Father and the Son: for in fact neither inculcations nor examples are wanting of such worship. But as in the economy of salvation, which answers to the order of the Persons, the Father works by the Son, and the Son by the Holy Spirit; for the same reason, the glory of the Deity, which consists of adoration, is by the Holy Spirit, who moves the hearts of the faithful to prayer, referred through the Son, (as Mediator,) to the Father. And therefore he is oftener represented as the Author and the moving principle of prayer than as its object; the one who invokes, i. e. causes us to invoke, rather than invoked himself.

2. Though the gift of God, if his essence be undivided cannot itself be God, yet if the *distinctions* in the Godhead be considered, nothing forbids the idea that a gift of God may be also a Divine Person: just as Christ himself, a Divine Person, is himself likewise called the gift of God, John iii. 16. and iv. 10. and John ix. 5. And thus the Holy Spirit may be so called. Nor is it always repugnant that the same should be at once a gift, and a giver of himself, as Christ gives himself for us, to nourish us up unto eternal life. *The bread which I shall give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world,* John vi. 51.

3. If things are occasionally attributed to the Spirit, which seem scarce suitable to

a Person, as when it is said that we are *anointed, baptised, and filled* with him; that he is *poured forth* from God and *given* to us;—such expressions must be understood of his gifts within us, and are quite consistent with the truth of his Personality. Thus indeed we are said to *put on* Christ, to *receive* him as a gift from God, and to *feed upon* him, without prejudice to the personality of the Son.

4. The *divisions* of the Spirit, Heb. ii. 4, signifying not passive partitions of the Spirit himself, but active distributions of his gifts there mentioned: distributions which are made by the Holy Spirit, who distributes to every one as he will, 1 Cor. xii. 11. Accordingly, though we acknowledge the distribution of his gifts, we deny the division of his Person, which in itself is undivided, but distinct from every thing else.

5. As the term Holy Spirit often signifies simply the gifts of the Spirit, so is he said to admit of increase or diminution, not with reference to himself, but to the gifts which he pours out upon man. Thus God is said to have set apart a portion of the same spirit which he had conferred upon Moses, i. e. of the same gifts and graces which were necessary to support him under the weight of public government, for the seventy elders who were to share his burdens, Num. xi. 17. Elisha asks for himself a double portion of the Spirit, 2 Kings ii. 9. i. e. spiritual powers of twice the extent usually observed in other prophets, or a double portion of the gifts of the Spirit, great abundance of them to sustain the great and weighty office imposed on him. And if this is called the power and spirit of Elias, Luke i. 17, still it must be understood not as originally his, but that Elias was the subject in which it resided.

6. The true God cannot be a messenger by command, because he acknowledges no superior. But he may be a messenger by consent. His thus becoming so, denotes indeed a difference of office, but not of essence. And in this latter sense, the Son and the Spirit are declared to be sent.

7. The Holy Spirit (it is said) was not before the glorification of Christ, John vii. 39. But this cannot mean absolutely, as if he then first began personally to exist. The effects of his power demonstrate the contrary. The expression relates only to the more abundant effusion which should afterwards take place on the apostles and others.

TURRETINE.

This Doctrine of great importance to the Believer.

To thee, O believer in Jesus! this article of the Spirit's deity is a maxim of indisputable moment—an axiom of indubitable truth. Thou wilt not deny his word, which asserts it; thou canst not resist his *witness in thyself*, which confirms it to a demonstration. Others may deny what they do not experience or feel; but thou knowest *him that is true*, because thou art *in him*; and he, with all his evidences of comfort, love, and joy, *dwelleth in thee*. He first brought thee spiritual life from the death of sin: he reconciled thee to God, when thou wast an enemy by wicked works: he giveth thee a thousand tokens of his presence and support: he leadeth thy thoughts and thy heart direct to God and heaven; preserves thee (always ready in thyself to stray) from numberless snares in thy daily walk, and at length will give thee *an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom*. Thou constantly feelest thyself to be a poor, dependent creature; able to think nothing, to will nothing, and to do nothing good of thy own power; and it is thy privilege and thy joy to find this gracious Spirit working in thee both *to will and to do of his own pleasure*. Thou art never happy but in this perception. Thou art never holy but in this enjoyment. Thou art never safe but in this protection. What cares the devil for all the resolutions and strength of man, even if man could exert them, without grace divine? He broke down the patience of the most patient Job, and made him curse the day in which he was born, when God permitted him to exercise his power for a trial. And he would bring to nothing the highest attainments of thy soul, did the Spirit of truth depart from thee for a moment. If any man bade fair to stand alone, surely it must have been the man *after God's own heart*; but he fell, as every body knows, and fell foully and horribly too. If any man could hope to recover himself from a fall, who might expect to do it sooner than he, who had vanquished repeated foes, and trampled upon the boasted strength of a giant; yet this man, a prince and a prophet too, wise and powerful, lay for a long time in his transgression, and at last cried out, like a helpless infant, for the restoration and support of God's *free Spirit*, Psal. li. 12. He found

the powers of darkness and sin too mighty for his feeble efforts to resist, and too subtle for his dull understanding to oppose. The wisdom of God's Spirit alone could repel the sophistry of hell, and the energy of the Almighty bring him back from the captivity of Satan.

Art thou not sensible of this gracious operation, O Christian! from time to time within thy soul? Dost thou never feel a power, which is not thine own? never taste a joy, which animal sense cannot induce? never rise to views, which nature cannot show thee? never have a communion with Heaven and the unutterable glories of the world above, which earth could not inspire?

AMB. SERLE.

The particular Office and Character of the Holy Ghost.

I HAVE often thought what a tenderness the Lord Jesus manifested to his people, in that interesting moment, when about to leave them to the more immediate ministry of the Holy Ghost, in that he spake of him under so many different names and characters. Had he meant only to have identified his Person, one surely would have been enough. But no! It is plain that the Redeemer intended thereby to endear him the more to our affections, that by so many precious names, and all of them strikingly expressive of a particular office and character, we might find somewhat peculiarly sweet and affectionate in every one! And hence he is endeared to the heart, that is more and more enlightened to see his ignorance, as a Teacher; to the soul tempted with unbelief, as a Witness; to the cold and lifeless in prayer, as a *Spirit of grace and of supplication*. In times when errors prevail, and the great truths of God are called in question, the soul regards him then particularly, as *the Spirit of truth to guide into all truth*. And when the heart is bowed down under manifold heaviness, it is precious to be able to look up to him, as *the Holy Ghost, the Comforter*. . . .

And first, as an Almighty Teacher, he stands forth a most glorious testimony to the truth.

It was a covenant promise, relating to the gospel church; *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord*. And Jesus himself explained this, in reference to the Holy Ghost. *When he (says Christ) the Spirit of truth is come, he shall teach you*

all things. He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you. And one of the apostles adds in confirmation of it, *The anointing which you have received of him, abideth on you, and ye need not that any man teach you. But the same anointing teacheth you all things. . . .*

To him it particularly belongs to open to the soul all that relates, in the covenant of the Redemption, to the Father's love, the Redeemer's grace, and his own precious manifestations. His is the blessed work to reveal the whole scheme of salvation to the sinner's view, and no less to open the sinner's heart to the cordial reception of the truth in the love of it. It is he, and he alone, that can *convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*: and while impressing on the sinner's mind the fullest and strongest apprehensions of the sinful, helpless, and ruined state of our undone nature, which renders redemption-work so abundantly interesting, to him alone it belongs to enlighten the eye of our understanding, to behold the Son of God in all the glories of his Person, and in the suitableness, and fulness, and all-sufficiency of his redemption; so as to carry conviction to the heart, that *there is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved.*

But what I would most earnestly desire to impress upon the reader's mind, respecting the office of this matchless instructor, and what above all things I do beg of him never to lose sight of in the recollection of his character, is the manner and effects of his divine teaching. Not only do those glorious truths of God which he teacheth, mark the greatness of his Person; but the sovereignty of his method in teaching them, decidedly proves *his eternal power and Godhead.* As it was said of the Lord Jesus in the days of his flesh, *never man spake like this man*: so of the Holy Ghost in the day of his power, it must be said, *He teacheth not as man teacheth! . . .*

He is also a *Witness* in the heart of every real believer *to the truth as it is in Jesus.* For under this character, as well as the former, he is pointed out to us by the Redeemer, when predicting his coming:—*He shall testify of me.*

And how sweetly and graciously doth he testify of Jesus, and perform every

other part of this blessed work in the heart! Truly is that scripture verified to the believer's experience, wherein God appeals to the fact itself, in proof: *Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.* For every single instance of his power over the heart, in the multiform methods by which he witnesseth to the truth as it is in Jesus, carries with it a testimonial of his Godhead. . . .

Who, but the Holy Ghost, can witness to the gracious state of the people of God, when under the doubts and fears which the remains of unbelief, and in-dwelling corruption, form in the heart!—Who but he can testify to the soul, that the believer is justified before God, by the obedience of the Lord Jesus, and hath redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace! Who, but the blessed Spirit, can witness to the spirits of the redeemed, concerning their adoption-character before God; when the great accuser of the brethren, joining with the perfidy of their own hearts, are prompting them to call every evidence in question!

My brethren! if you know any thing of the Spirit's work in the heart, you will know how to value God the Holy Ghost in this most interesting office of his ministry, as a witness to all the great truths of salvation. For nothing, surely, can be more satisfying to the soul, in seasons of distrust, in times of temptation, under languor both of mind and body, than his gracious testimony to the everlasting, unchangeable love of God the Father; and the endearing tokens of affection which he discovers to the believer, concerning the Person and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even a single promise, brought home and applied to the heart, by the blessed Spirit, in an hour of dejection and sorrow, what a cordial doth it afford to the drooping spirits! It produceth that sweet effect which the apostle prayed for the Church, in *filling the soul with joy and peace in believing, and enabling it to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. . . .*

Let us go on to the consideration of another part of the Spirit's work in the heart, by which he eminently displays the vast importance and efficiency of his ministry in the church of the Lord Jesus;—I mean, as the quickener to prayer, and the helper of our infirmities in prayer. And

this forms so distinguishing a part in the operations of the Holy Ghost, that the bare mention of it ought to be enough, in confirmation of its reality. I pity the man indeed, who is altogether unconscious of this work of God the Spirit in the soul, and hath yet to learn what his influence means, when drawing nigh the mercy-seat.

Of all the branches of the Divine science, in the practical parts of experimental religion; none can be more interesting, because none can be more frequently needed than an heartfelt acquaintance with that sweet promise of the gospel-church, in which God saith, *I will pour out the Spirit of grace and of supplication*. And the man who is well versed in the knowledge of his own heart, and hath drank deep into the same spirit of divine things as the apostle, will, from the same consciousness as he had, of not knowing *what to pray for as we ought*, best know how to appreciate the gracious work of God the Spirit, in this special office of his divine agency. . . .

And is not the blessed Spirit a Comforter also? Oh! yes. Praised be his name, this is a very decisive part of his Divine character. The Lord Jesus himself particularly directed the church to receive him under this title, when he emphatically called him the Holy Ghost, *the Comforter*. And the mournful, long-trying, long-exercised believer, who hath at times known and felt the refreshments of his grace under this special part of his divine offices, would not, I am well assured, forego the evidences of his power, and Godhead in it, neither part with the sweet name of Comforter, for a thousand worlds. . . .

The sympathy of his love in our afflictions, the soft and tender soothings of his grace to our distresses, the manifestations which he makes of the Lord Jesus, in all his lovely characters, exactly suited to the soul's need; and the grace, and purposes, and mercy, which he displays, of the Father's heart, towards his people in their troubles—these are among the testimonies by which the Holy Ghost manifests himself as a Comforter, when directing the heart into *the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Jesus Christ*.

There is one office more of the blessed Spirit, by which his work is made known in the heart, though it is not (as far as my observation hath extended to the writings of others) as generally noticed as its im-

portance should seem to demand: I mean as a *Remembrancer*. *He shall bring all things* (said Jesus when speaking of him,) *to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you*.

And I have found this office in the Spirit's work, at times, so very interesting and precious (if I may venture to say so) in my own experience, that I cannot but beg to recommend it to the reader's notice with the more particular attention. My memory of divine things is so treacherous, (though it may not perhaps be equally so with the reader,) that, like a sieve, every thing valuable runs through it, and leaves nothing of the finer parts behind. It is, I conceive, therefore, a most gracious and endearing office of God the Holy Ghost, to act as a Remembrancer, in calling the mind afresh to the recollection of the precious tokens of divine love long past. And in those numerous instances, where the temptations of Satan, joined with the treachery and deceitfulness of the heart, have blotted out from the mind a thousand memorandums of grace received, which in the moment of making them we fondly thought never would be lost; surely it is a distinguishing mercy in the Holy Ghost to bring them again to remembrance. And what can be more pleasing, or more profitable, than when the blessed Spirit opens to our view the volume of our own history, turns back the leaves of our experience, points to the chapter and page where Jesus showed his love, and God the Father answered prayer, and thus brightens up again the recollection of long-forgotten blessings, and stamps afresh the assurance, that nothing but mercy and goodness have been following us all the days of our life!

DR. HAWKER.

The Spirit giveth Life.

THE greatest part of the world, whether learned or unlearned, think that there is no need of purging and purifying of their hearts for the right knowledge of Christ and his gospel; but though their lives be never so wicked, their hearts never so foul within, yet they may know Christ sufficiently out of their treatises and discourses, out of their mere systems and bodies of divinity: which I deny not to be useful in a subordinate way; although our Saviour prescribeth his disciples another method to come to the right knowledge

of Divine truths, by doing of God's will. *He that will do my Father's will* (saith he) *shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.* He is a true Christian indeed, not he that is only book-taught, but he that is God-taught; he that hath an *unction from the Holy One* (as our apostle calleth it) *that teacheth him all things*; he that hath the Spirit of Christ within him, that *searcheth out the deep things of God: for as no man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.*

Ink and paper can never make us Christians, can never beget a new nature, a living principle in us; can never form Christ, or any true notions of spiritual things, in our hearts. The gospel, that new law which Christ delivered to the world, it is not merely a *letter* without us, but a *quickening Spirit* within us. Cold theorems and maxims, dry and jejune disputes, lean syllogistical reasonings, could never yet of themselves beget the least glimpse of true heavenly light, the least sap of saving knowledge in any heart. All this is but the groping of the poor dark spirit of man after Truth, to find it out with his own endeavours, and feel it with his own cold and benumbed hands. Words and syllables, which are but dead things, cannot possibly convey the living notions of heavenly truths to us. The secret mysteries of a divine life, of a new nature, of Christ formed in our hearts, they cannot be written or spoken, language and expressions cannot reach them; neither can they be ever truly understood, except the soul itself be kindled from within, and awakened into the life of them. A painter that would draw a rose, though he may flourish some likeness of it in figure and colour, yet he can never paint the scent and fragrancy; or if he would draw a flame, he cannot put a constant heat into his colours; he cannot make his pencil drop a sound, as the echo in the epigram mocks at him

—*Si vis similem pingere, pinge sonum.*

All the skill of cunning artisans and mechanics cannot put a principle of life into a statue of their own making. Neither are we able to inclose in words and letters the life, soul, and essence of any spiritual truths, and as it were to incorporate it in them.

Some philosophers have determined, that *ἀρετή* is not *διδασκόν*; virtue cannot be taught by any certain rules or precepts. Men and books may propound some directions to us, that may set us in such a way of life and practice, as in which we shall at last find it within ourselves, and be experimentally acquainted with it: but they cannot teach it us like a mechanic art or trade. No, surely, *there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding.* But we shall not meet with this spirit any where but in the way of obedience: the knowledge of Christ, and the keeping of his commandments, must always go together, and be mutual causes of one another.

CUDWORTH.

Take Christ as a purchaser: the purchase is made, the price is paid; yet is not the state perfect, unless there be investiture. But the investiture is by the Spirit. - - - What will ye that I say? Unless we be joined to him, as well as he to us: as he to us by our flesh, so we to him by his Spirit; nothing is done. - - - Ye know that it is the first question the apostle asked, *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?* If not, all else is to no purpose. Without it, we are still (as Jude calleth us) *animales, Spiritum non habentes.* And this is a certain rule. He that hath not his Spirit, is *none of his*; Christ profiteth him nothing. - - - As nothing is done for us, so nothing can be done by us, if he (the Spirit) come not. No means on our part avail us aught. 1. Not *baptism*; for *Nisi ex Spiritu*, if He come not, well may it wash soil from our skin, but no stain from our soul: no laver of regeneration without *renewing of the Holy Ghost.* 2. No *preaching* neither; for that is but a *letter* that *killeth*, except the Spirit come too and quicken it. 3. No *sacrament*; we have a plain text for it; *the flesh profiteth nothing*, if the Lord and Giver of life (the Spirit) be away. 4. To conclude; no *prayer*: for, *nisi*, unless the Spirit help our infirmity and make intercession with us, we neither know how, nor what to pray. · · · · · BP. ANDREWS.

Operations of the Spirit.

WHEN the Spirit by the power of the word of grace doth work the will in us, yet still the will hath the dominion of its own act, that is, it is not servilely, or com-

pulsorily thereunto **overswayed**, but worketh, *ex motu proprio*, by a self-motion, unto which it is quickened and actuated by the sweetness of divine grace, as the seed of that action, according to that excellent known speech of St. Augustine, *Certum est nos velle cum volumus, sed Deus facit ut velimus*. Thus we see how the subjection of Christ's people unto his kingdom is a voluntary act in regard of man's will, and an act of power in regard of God's Spirit inwardly enlightening the mind with the spiritual evidence, not only of the truth, but the excellence and superlative goodness of the gospel of Christ; and inwardly touching the heart, and framing it to a lovely conformity and obedience thereunto.

The ground of this point, why there is an act of power required to conquer the wills of sinners unto Christ, is that notable enmity, stoutness, reluctance, rebellion, weariness, averseness; in one word, fleshliness which possesseth the wills of men by nature: such forwardness unto evil, so much frowardness against good, such a spring and bias from private ends, and worldly objects, such fears without, such fightings within, such allurements on the right hand, such frowns and affrightments on the left; such depths of Satan, such hellish and unsearchable plots of principalities and powers, to keep fast and faithful to themselves this chief mistress of the soul of man; such sly and soaking, such furious and fiery temptations, to flatter or to fright it away from Christ; such strong prejudices, such deep reasonings, such high imaginations, such scornful and mean conceits of the purity and power of the ways of Christ, such deceitfulness of heart, such mis-persuasions and presumptions of our present peace, or at least of the easiness of our future reformation, such strong surmises of carnal hopes which will be prevented, or worldly dangers incurred, or private ends disappointed; such lusts to be denied, such members to be hewed off, such friends to be forsaken, such passions to be subdued, such certain persecutions from the world, such endless solicitations of Satan, such irreconcilable contentions with the flesh; in the midst of all these pull-backs, how can we think the will should escape and break through, if God did not send his Spirit, as once the angel unto Lot, Gen. xix. 16, to lay hands upon it while it lingers and hankers after its wonted course, to use a merciful con-

quest over it, and, as the Scriptures express it, *to lead it, to draw it, to take it by the arm, to carry it in his bosom, to bear it as an eagle her young ones on her wings*; nay, by the terrors of the Lord, and the power of his word and wrath, to pull and snatch it as a brand out of the fire? Certainly, there is so much extreme perverseness, so much hellishness, and devilish antipathy to God and his service in the heart by nature, that if it were left to its own stubbornness to kick, and rebel, and fall back and harden itself, and were not set upon by the grace of Christ, no man living would turn unto him, or make use of his blood; by the same reason that any one man perisheth, every man would too, because in all there is as fundamental and original enmity to the ways of grace, as there is in any.

The consideration whereof may justly humble us in our reflection upon ourselves, whom neither the promises of heaven can allure, nor the blood and passions of Christ persuade, nor the flames of hell affright from our sins, till the Lord by the sweet and gracious power of his Holy Spirit subdue and conquer the soul unto himself. If a man should rise from the dead, and truly relate unto the conscience the woful and everlasting horrors of hell, if a man's natural capacity were made as wide to apprehend the wrath, fury, and vengeance of a provoked God, the foulness, guilt and venom of a soul fuller of sins than the heavens of stars, as the most intelligent devils of hell do conceive them. If an archangel or seraphim should be sent from heaven to reveal unto the soul of a natural man the infinite glory of God's presence, the full pleasures of his right hand, the admirable beauty of his ways, the intimate conformity and resemblance between his divine nature in himself, and image of his holiness in the creature, the unsearchable and bottomless love of Christ in his incarnation and sufferings, the endless incomprehensible virtue and preciousness of his blood and prayers; yet so desperately evil is the heart of man, that if after all this, God should not afford the blessed operation and concurrence of his own gracious Spirit, the revelation of his own arm and power upon the soul, to set on those instrumental causes, it would be invincible by any evidence, which all the cries and flames of hell, which all the armies and hosts of heaven were able to beget. There

is no might or power able to snatch a man out of the hands of his sin, but only God's Spirit. Notable are the expressions which the Holy Ghost every where useth, to set forth this wretched condition of the heart by nature: wilfulness and self-willedness, *We will not hearken, we will not have this man to reign over us; θελημα*, many wills in one. Rebellion and stubbornness, stoutness of heart, contestation with God, and gainsaying his word; impudence, stiffness, and hard-heartedness, mischievous profoundness, and deep reasonings against the law of God; pertinacity, resolvedness, and abiding in mischief; they hold fast deceit; obstinacy and self-obduration, *They have hardened their necks that they might not hear*; impotency, immoveableness, and undocileness, their heart is uncircumcised; *they cannot hear, there is none that understandeth or seeketh after God*: scorn and slighting of the messages of the Lord, where is his word? *Where is the promise of his coming?* Incredulity, and belying the Lord in his word, saying it is not he: *who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Wrestling, resisting, and fighting with the word, rejecting the counsel of God, vexing and striving with his Holy Spirit, *Ye have always resisted the Holy Ghost*. Rage and fierceness of disordered affections, despising of goodness, traitorous, heady, and high-minded thoughts. Brutishness of immoderate lust, the untamed madness of an enraged beast without any restraint of reason, or moderation. In one word, a hell, and gulf of unsearchable mischief, which is never satisfied. It is impossible that any reasonable man, duly considering all these difficulties, should conceive such an heart as this to be overcome with mere moral persuasions, or by any thing less than the mighty power of God's own grace. To him therefore we should willingly acknowledge all our conversion and salvation. So extremely impotent are we, O Lord, unto any good, so utterly unprofitable, and unmeet for our master's use, and yet so strongly hurried by the impulsion of our own lust towards hell, that no precipice, nor danger, no hope nor reward, no man or angel is able to stop us, without thine own immediate power, and therefore *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name* only be attributed the glory of our conversion. **BP. REYNOLDS.**

It is clear that all Christian virtues and graces, though wrought immediately by us, and with the free consent of our own wills, are yet the fruit of God's Spirit working in us. That is to say, they do not proceed originally from any strength of nature, or any inherent power in man's free-will; nor are they acquired by the culture of philosophy, the advantages of education, or any improvement whatsoever of natural abilities by the helps of art or industry: but are in truth the proper effects of that supernatural grace which is given unto us by the good pleasure of God the Father, merited for us by the precious blood of God the Son, and conveyed into our hearts by the sweet and secret inspirations of God the Holy Ghost. Love, joy, and peace are fruits, not at all of the flesh, but merely of the Spirit.

All those very many passages in the New Testament which either set forth the unframeableness of our nature to the doing of any thing that is good, (*not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think a good thought; in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing*, 2 Cor. iii. 5; Rom. vii. 18; and the like,) or else ascribe our best performances to the glory of the grace of God, (*without me you can do nothing. All our sufficiency is of God. Not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. It is God that worketh in you both the will and deed*, John xv. 7; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Eph. ii. 8; Phil. ii. 15; and the like), are so many clear confirmations of the truth. Upon the evidence of which truth it is that our mother the church hath taught us in the public service to beg at the hands of Almighty God that he would 'endue us with the grace of his Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to his holy word:' and again, (consonantly to the matter we are in hand with, almost *in terminis*,) that he would 'give to all men increase of grace to hear meekly his word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.' As without which grace it were not possible for us to amend our lives, or to bring forth such fruits, according as God requireth in his holy word.

And the reason is clear: because as the tree is, such must the fruit be. Do men look to *gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* Matt. vii. 16. Or can they expect from a *salt fountain* other than brackish water? Certainly, what is born of flesh can be no better than flesh. *Who*

can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean? Job xiv. 4. Or how can any thing that is good proceed from a heart, all the *imaginations of the thoughts whercof are only and continually evil?* Gen. vi. 5. If we would have the fruit good, reason will (and our Saviour prescribeth the same method) that order be taken, *first to make the tree good*, James i. 21.

But you will say, it is impossible so to alter the nature of the flesh as to make it bring forth good spiritual fruit; as it is to alter the nature of a crab or thorn, so as to make it bring forth a pleasant apple. Truly, and so it is: if you shall endeavour to mend the fruit by altering the stock, you shall find the labour altogether fruitless; a crab will be a crab still, when you have done what you can: and you may as well hope to wash an Ethiopian white, as to purge the flesh from sinful pollution.

The work therefore must be done quite another way: not by alteration, but addition. That is, leaving the old principle to remain as it was, by superinducing *ab extra* a new principle, of a different and more kindly quality. We see the experiment of it daily in the grafting of trees: a crab-stock, if it have a scion of some delicate apple artfully grafted in it, look what branches are suffered to grow out of the stock itself—they will all follow the nature of the stock, and if they bring forth any fruit at all, it will be sour and stypitic. But the fruit that groweth from the graft will be pleasant to the taste, because it followeth the nature of the graft. We read of *λογος ἐμψυτος*, an ingrafted word. Our carnal hearts are the old stock; which, before the word of God be grafted in it, cannot bring forth any spiritual fruit acceptable to God; but when, by the powerful operation of his Holy Spirit, the word which we hear with our outward ears is inwardly grafted therein, it then bringeth forth the fruit of good living. So that all the bad fruits that appear in our lives come from the old stock, the flesh: and if there be any good fruit of the Spirit in us, it is from the virtue of that word of grace that is grafted in us.

BP. SANDERSON.

Some philosophers of old flattered the pride and vanity of men, by teaching them that they wanted nothing to make them virtuous, but only a firm and steady reso-

lution of being so; that this resolution they themselves were masters of, and might exert at their own pleasure. They confidently boasted that their happiness was a thing wholly in their own power; that they need not ask of the gods to be virtuous, nor consequently to be happy, since they could be so without their aid or concurrence, or even in despite of them. The Pelagians afterwards raised their heresies upon the principles which these heathen philosophers had first broached; they engaged in the quarrel of depraved nature against divine grace: all our disorders they would have to be the effects not of sin but of nature; all our evil inclinations seemed to them capable of being subdued by our own unassisted reason; and they did not think the succour of any supernatural grace necessary either for the combating of vice, or the maintenance of their integrity and virtue. But the sober Christian hath learned from the Scriptures to speak and to think more humbly of himself, and more becomingly and magnificently of God; we are there taught that *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think*, much less to do, *any thing as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God*; that *it is God which worketh within us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*; that it is *by the Spirit* we must *mortify the deeds of the body*, if we would *live*; that it is God who, by his Spirit, *makes us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight*. The humble and devout Christian being thus satisfied of the necessity of God's grace, both from his own experience and from the Scriptures, and being assured of the vital influences of this Spirit from the promises made to him in the Gospel, will not be over-curious to inquire into the secret and inconceivable manner of its operation. He will choose rather to feel these influences, than to understand or explain them, and will not doubt of that power, which, though he cannot give an account of as to the manner of its working, he plainly perceives to be great and marvellous from its mighty and wonderful effects: for when, in reading the holy Scriptures, he finds the veil of darkness removed from before his understanding; when those clouds of ignorance that had overcast his mind, are presently dispersed; when the

doubts under which he had for some time labored are on a sudden cleared; when such pious thoughts as were wont to pass transiently are long dwelt upon, so as to leave behind them deep and lasting impressions; when these are suggested to him without his seeking, and are urged and pressed upon him so importunately, that he cannot choose but listen unto them; when, from a calm and serious consideration of the state of his own soul, the odiousness and danger of sin, the beauty and necessity of holiness, he is led to make good and pious resolutions of serving God with greater purity for the time to come; when he finds a sudden *impulse* upon his spirits, rousing him up to the performance of some important duty which he had before neglected; or an unexpected check, stopping him in the midst of his course, when he is rushing on blindly and impetuously to the commission of some heinous sin; when in his devotions he finds his attention fixed, his affections inflamed, and his heart melted within him; when, while the voice of God's minister preaching the saving truths of the Gospel sounds in his ears, he is sensible of an inward voice speaking with greater force and efficacy to his soul, to his understanding, and to his heart; when, under the pressure of any grievous affliction, he feels unexpected joy and comfort; when *light rises up in the midst of darkness*; when *there is given unto him beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*; upon all these and the like occasions he is sensible of the presence and aid of God's Holy Spirit, whose *grace* alone is *sufficient* to all these purposes, and whose *strength* is thus *made perfect in his weakness*.

BP. SMALEDGE.

All that Christ has suffered and done for the salvation of mankind, is of no benefit to us, as long as we are separated from him. Therefore, that he may communicate to us those things, which he has received from his Father, it is necessary that he should become ours, and dwell in us. And for this cause he is called our Head and first-born Brother, and we again are said to be grafted into him, and to have *put on* Christ.

This union alone shows, that with respect to us, he did not come into the world

with the mere empty title of Saviour. And it is by grace, and by the power of this Holy Spirit, that we become his members, in order that he may possess us, and that we may mutually possess him also. It is by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we are regenerated for a heavenly life, so that we no longer are guided by our own, but by his motions or operations. If there is any good in us, it is the fruit of his grace only; and without him all our light, and even all our best qualities are but darkness.

For this reason, St. Paul so highly exalts the office of the Spirit; for the ministers and teachers of the Gospel would in vain raise their voices, and cry out; did not Jesus Christ, the chief Shepherd, draw to himself by his Spirit those whom the Father has given him? Thus the perfection of salvation being in Jesus Christ, in order to make us partakers of it, *he baptizeth us with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, enlightening us in the faith of his Gospel, and regenerating and making us new creatures; he consecrates us temples and sanctuaries of the living God.

As we cannot come to Jesus Christ, unless we are drawn to him by the Holy Spirit; when we are therefore so highly favored, we are lost in astonishment, and are raised in our minds to thoughts far surpassing the human understanding. For the soul, enlightened by his divine light, receives, as it were, a new eye to contemplate the heavenly mysteries, with whose splendor and brilliancy it was before quite dazzled. The understanding thus enlightened by the Holy Spirit, begins immediately to relish the things that belong to the kingdom of heaven, of which before it had no conception, and for which it had no relish.

Some perhaps may say, that they do not deny the necessity of our having the Holy Spirit; but that, from a sentiment of humility and modesty, we ought not to think that we have yet received him. If this is the case, what does the Apostle mean, when he exhorts the Corinthians, *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves, whether Jesus Christ be in you. Hereby know ye*, saith St. John, *that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit*. Would it not be to call in question the promises of Jesus Christ, were we to pre-

tend to be the servants of God, without having his Spirit; since he has declared that he will pour it out on all believers? It is a dreadful blindness to charge Christians with presumption, under the pretence that they boast of the presence of the Holy Spirit, without whose efficacy there can be no Christianity. Such persons plainly show, by their example, the truth of what the Lord said, that his Spirit is unknown to the world, and that none know him, but those with whom he dwelleth, and in whom he is. CALVIN.

The Spirit, the bond of Union between Christ and Believers.

Now the bond of our union to Christ is the Holy Spirit derived from him, as the Head of the church, and is the inward, powerful, and lasting principle of holiness and new obedience in believers. *He that is joined unto the Lord, is one Spirit*; that is, by the Spirit of holiness has a real participation of his life, is both quickened and united to him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. John vi. 56. When the prophet Elisha by the outward applying of the parts of his body to the dead child, inspired life into him, there was no real union between them, 2 Kings iv. 34; but Christ is by his Spirit so intimately united to believers, that he lives in them and they in him, Gal. ii. 20. The sanctifying Spirit renews the directing and commanding faculties, the fountains of moral actions, enlightens the understanding with saving knowledge, rectifies the obliquity of the will, purifies the affections, and reforms the life; so that 'the same mind' is in Christians 'as was in Christ;' and as his conversation was, such is theirs in the world. This divine change is not wrought by natural reason, though assisted by the most powerful arguments. The breath of a man may as easily dispel a mist or thaw a frost, as human directions and motives to virtue can renew the mind and heart, and produce a holy frame of soul towards God. Renewed Christians are said to 'be in the Spirit,' illuminated, inclined and enabled by the Spirit to do God's will; and the Spirit of God to dwell in them, by his peculiar and eminent operations. 'They live in the spirit, and walk in the spirit.' An angel may assume a body and act by it; but the human soul enlivens it, and performs sensible operations by it. And such a principle is the

Holy Spirit to the soul, gives it spiritual life, activity, and power for good works. By what application of the Spirit's power this is produced, is mysterious and inexplicable; but as the apostle speaks of his rapture into the third heavens, that he knew it was real, and heard unutterable things, though how it was performed, *whether in the body, or out of the body*, he could not tell: thus when a natural man, the current of whose thoughts and affections was to the things of this world, becomes spiritual; when the carnal appetite is subdued, and sanctified reason has the throne; when he feels such strong and sweet impulsives to holiness, as engage the will; when the stream of his desires ascends to the things above, and his life becomes holy and heavenly; he feels and knows this wonderful change, though the manner how it was wrought he cannot tell.

DR. BATES.

The Grace of God is the Gift of the Spirit, and must be sought through Christ the Mediator.

HAVING insisted so much on the doctrine of divine grace in general, it is not requisite to insist long on the way the Gospel teacheth it is communicated to us, and should be sought after by us, that is, out of the fulness that is in the Son of God, by the application of his Spirit. This paper is not designed for considering objections against the Trinity, but against the doctrine of the Gospel about the way to pardon of sin, and grace to perform duty: in the mean time, supposing the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, there are several considerations that might be of use to them who wonder why it should not be sufficient in general to seek grace from God, without asking his Spirit out of the fulness that is in the Mediator.

And here it may be useful to consider first the beautiful harmony that may be found between the several parts of the doctrine of the Scriptures about these adorable divine Persons. If they are represented co-operating in the work of Redemption, they are represented so likewise in the other divine works of creation and providence; and as there are different operations more immediately ascribed to each of them, so what is ascribed to the Spirit in the work of our salvation, has a beautiful resemblance to the part attri-

buted to him in the other divine works. In effect, it is very observable, that the Holy Ghost is represented as more immediately concerned in completing the divine works. It seems to be his particular office to stamp the lovely image of the Creator on the creatures, according to their several capacities, whether visible or invisible, adorning the former with all that beauty, light, order and perfection they are capable of; and adorning the latter with the beauty of holiness, producing that light, order, and regular disposition, in which the perfection of created spirits consisteth. His operation, on visible as well as invisible creatures, is (according to a way of speaking of some of the ancients) a work of sanctification. At the beginning of the Bible we are told, after the mass of the world was produced, the earth was void, and without form, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the first account we have of bringing all things to order, is the Spirit's moving on the face of the deep. His operations to this day are a continuation of his ancient work, a bringing light out of darkness, and order out of confusion; bringing the new creation, as he did the old, to order and perfection gradually through several days' works, till at last all terminate in an everlasting sabbath. In Psal. civ. it is said that God sends forth his Spirit, to restore the decayed face of nature, and to revive it with fresh lustre and beauty, which is a very proper work for him who is the Comforter: he is represented also as the immediate cause of all spiritual impressions, ordinary and extraordinary, of prophetic inspiration, gifts of miracles, and languages, as well as the ordinary graces necessary to all sorts of persons. It is observable, that though the Son of God, while on earth, gave many excellent instructions to his disciples himself, their gifts and graces were never completed, till he sent them his Spirit, as he promised. His name, the 'Holy Spirit,' and other names given him, have a manifest suitableness to his office: and the several parts of the doctrine of the Scriptures concerning him, both in the Old Testament, and the New, have such an uniformity and harmony in them, as well deserveth our special observation; and, if duly considered, helps to illustrate the subject in hand.

Since it is so, that it is by the Holy Ghost always that God sanctifieth his

creatures; surely nothing is more just than a devout acknowledgment of this in divine worship, in prayers and praises for grace, by asking of God his Spirit, and blessing him for such an inestimable gift. It is a most reasonable acknowledgment, because it is an acknowledgment of the truth, of a very important truth. It is a part of devotion and godliness, because he is not a creature, (as appears plainly from Scripture,) but a Person in the Godhead. And in effect, (not to insist on all the proofs of his divinity,) one would think it were easy to see that the omnipresence and vast sufficiency of power necessarily supposed in the Spirit's operations are absolutely incompatible with the finite nature of a creature: considering that the highest creature must be at an infinite distance below the Creator; and withal that the efficacy of grace in the soul (which is of a far more noble nature than the visible world) is one of the most glorious operations in which Omnipotence exerteth itself.

It is observable, that God in all his works taketh pleasure to use a subordination of various means and instruments, though he could produce them immediately by himself, without such means; yet God does not make it a part of worship and devotion to acknowledge the efficacy of created instruments, (such as, for instance, the ministry of angels,) but only the efficacy of the Holy Ghost sent by himself and his Son: and this is made so requisite, that in the solemn rite by which members are received into the church, they must be baptized in his name: which surely, if considered aright, sheweth of how great importance it is in worship and devotion, and what strong ties baptized persons are under, to acknowledge carefully the efficacy of the adorable Spirit in the work of their salvation.

They that object against the necessity of applying for grace in such a manner as explicitly to acknowledge the efficacy of the Holy Ghost, will probably be much more against the other thing mentioned before, that is, that we should seek the grace of the Spirit out of the fulness that is in the Redeemer. They will look upon this as a strange multiplying of our views in devotion, without any necessity, or use.

But upon a little consideration, supposing once the doctrine of the Trinity, (which

it is better not to enter upon here, than to treat it superficially,) and supposing the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice and merits, which was vindicated before, it is easy to show that the doctrine, just now mentioned, is the most reasonable in the world.

For what more just, than that a person of merit, who has deserved blessings for others who are unworthy of them, should have his purchase put into his own hands, to dispense it to his favourites? The Scripture showeth that the graces of the Spirit are the fruits of Christ's merits: and on that, and perhaps several other accounts, the Holy Ghost, when he is said to be given to sinners, is called the Spirit of Christ; and we are expressly told, *He shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you*, John xvi. 14. that is (as the word really signifies there) shall give it unto you: it is evident therefore, that being the purchaser of all grace, and having the disposal of it, he should be acknowledged as the source of it.

It may not be improper to reflect here on the observation made before about God's ordinary way of working by a subordination of various means.

This is evident in nothing more than in his way of bestowing many of his favours on us. Though he could bestow them immediately himself, yet he makes even men in many cases instruments of good to one another. Infinite wisdom may have many good reasons for such a way of acting, unknown to us: one remarkable good effect of it we know is this, that it is an excellent foundation and cement of love and friendship among mankind: (and what is there among men more precious or amiable than that is?) Now supposing there were no other reason or necessity for it, yet what more just than that he who showed such incomparable friendship for sinners, as to give himself a sacrifice for their sins, should have the dispensing of grace for them, for performance of duty, and be entrusted with the whole management of their souls? which surely cannot be in more friendly hands. His receiving gifts for men, (as the Scripture expresseth it,) and having all fulness and treasures of wisdom to communicate to them by his Spirit, serveth as an additional means of cementing that incomparable friendship betwixt him and them: Surely to compare the two contrary suppositions that may be

made about this point; that which the Gospel teacheth is far more reasonable than to think that Christ, after having died for his people, never mindeth them more, and never doth any more for them.

To be perpetually employed in giving spiritual light, life, and strength, and joy to his people, we may easily conceive is an office very agreeable to his kind and bountiful nature. When he received gifts for them, and all power was given him, as our Mediator; he received the portion and spoil Isaiah speaks of, which was due to him for vanquishing hell and death; when he giveth these gifts, and seeth them flourish in the souls of redeemed sinners, he sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. And they must have very little faith or gratitude, who do not think spiritual blessings have the better relish for coming to sinners from such a kindly source, and through such friendly hands: certainly every man that sincerely believes in Christ, findeth additional consolation in spiritual blessings, by reflecting on the way they are derived to him, that they carry along with them the savour of his merits, and the relish of his friendship. In other cases, it is evident, that, besides the intrinsic value of a benefit, the pleasure of it is enhanced, if it come from the hands of a friend, of one to whom we are under strong obligations of love and gratitude otherwise: and surely it ought to be so in this case, above all others.

Besides, this way of seeking and receiving grace has a powerful influence on humility and gratitude, than which there are not two ornaments more becoming a sinful redeemed creature: for by this means, the way of *seeking grace*, doth naturally remind us of our sins, and also of God's mercy, by fixing our view on that great sacrifice, which gives the liveliest impression of both these great objects: And surely to take frequent clear views of these two objects, our guilt that needed such a sacrifice, and God's infinite love that provided it, is the way to promote that humility and gratitude, which have such a necessary connexion with repentance, faith in Christ, and the love of God, and all other graces whatsoever.

REV. J. MACLAURIN.

What is dearer to God the Father than his only Son? And what diviner blessing has he to bestow upon men than his Holy

Spirit? Yet has he given his Son for us, and by the hands of his Son he confers his blessed Spirit on us. *Jesus having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, shed it forth on men*, Acts ii. 33.

How the wondrous doctrine of the blessed Trinity shines through the whole of our religion, and sheds a glory upon every part of it! Here is God the Father, a king of infinite riches and glory, has constituted his beloved Son the high treasurer of heaven, and the Holy Spirit is the divine and inestimable treasure. What amazing doctrines of sacred love are written in our Bibles! What mysteries of mercy, what miracles of glory are these! Our boldest desires, and most raised hopes durst never aim at such blessings; there is nothing in all nature that can lead us to a thought of such grace.

The Spirit was given by the Father to the Son for men; for rebellious and sinful men, to make favorites and saints of them: this was the noble gift the Son received when he ascended on high. *And he distributed it to grace his triumph*, Psalm lxxviii. 18.

Was it not a divine honor which Jesus our Lord displayed on that day when the tongues of fire sat on his twelve apostles; when he sent his ambassadors to every nation to address them in their own language, to notify his accession to the throne of heaven, and to demand subjection to his government? When he conferred power upon his envoys to reverse the laws of nature, and imitate creation? To give eyes to the blind, and to raise the dead? All this was done by the Spirit, which he sent down upon them in the days of Pentecost.

But is this Spirit given to none but his apostles and the prime ministers in his kingdom? Was that rich treasure exhausted in the first ages of the Gospel, and none left for us? God forbid! Every one of his subjects has the same favor bestowed upon them, though not in the same degree: every humble and holy soul in our day, every true Christian is possessed of his Spirit; for, *he that has not the Spirit of Christ is none of his*, Rom. viii. 9. And wherever this Spirit is, it works miracles too; it changes the sinner to a saint, it opens his blind eyes, it new creates his nature; it raises the dead to a divine life, and teaches Egypt and Assyria, and the British isles, to speak the language of Canaan. It is this gift of the Spirit which

the Son sends down to us continually from the Father, that is the original and spring of all these strange blessings. . . .

The Father, what a glorious giver! The Son, what a glorious medium of communication! and the Spirit, what a glorious gift! We blush and adore while we partake of such immense favors, and gratitude is even overwhelmed with wonder.

O let our spirits rejoice in this blessed article of our religion! and may all the temptations that we meet with from men of reason, never, never baffle so sweet a faith!

DR. WATTS.

The way in which the Spirit acts on the Human Will.

THE judgment is never thoroughly enlightened to understand spiritual things in that immediate and ample beauty and goodness which is in them, but only by the Spirit of Christ, which maketh a man to have the self-same mind, judgment, opinion, and apprehension of heavenly things which he had; so that Christ and a Christian do *τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν*, *think the same thing*, as the apostle speaks, Phil. ii. 5. By the which Spirit of grace, working first upon the judgment to rectify that, and to convince it of the evidence and necessity of that most universal and adequate good which it presenteth, the whole nature is proportionably renewed, and Christ formed as well in the will and affections as in the understanding. As the body in the womb is not shaped by piecemeal, one part after another, but altogether by proportionable degrees and progresses of perfection. So that at the same time when the Spirit of grace, by an act of heavenly illumination, is present with the judgment of reason to evidence, not the truth only, but the *excellency of the knowledge of Christ* thereunto, it is likewise present by an act of heavenly persuasion, and most intimate allurement unto the will and affections, sweetly accommodating its working unto the exigence and condition of the faculties, that they likewise may with such liberty and complacency as becomes both their own nature, and the quality of obedience required, apply themselves to the desire and prosecution of those excellent things which are with so spiritual an evidence set forth unto them in the ministry of the Word. As by the same soul the eye seeth, and the ear heareth, and the hand worketh: so when Christ by his Spirit is

formed in us, (for the Spirit of Christ is the *actus primus*, or soul of a Christian man, that which animateth him unto an heavenly being and working,) every power of the soul and body is in some proportionable measure enabled to work, in such manner as is convenient and proper to the quality of its nature, to the right apprehension and voluntary prosecution of spiritual things. The same Spirit, which by

the word of grace doth fully convince the judgment, and let the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God shine* upon the mind, doth by the same word of grace proportionably excite, and assist the will to affect it, that as the understanding is elevated to the spiritual perception, so the will likewise is enabled to the spiritual love of heavenly things.

BP. REYNOLDS.

SECTION V.—THE TRINITY.

This Doctrine proved and enforced by Scripture.

BUT that I may unveil this mystery, and confirm this truth more clearly, we will consider each person distinctly, and show, that one as well as the other is really and truly God.

That the Father is God, none ever denied, and therefore we need not prove it. But if the Father be God, the Son must needs be God too; for the same names, properties, works, and worship, which in Scripture are ascribed to the Father, are frequently ascribed to the Son also in Scripture. The Father is called Jehovah in Scripture, so is the Son, Hos. i. 7; Jer. xxiii. 6. Father is called God, so is the Son, John i. 1; *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God*; with God as to his person, God as to his nature. So also John xx. 28; Acts xx. 28. Moreover is the Father Alpha and Omega, the first and the last? so is the Son, Rev. i. 8—Is the Father eternal? so is the Son, Isa. ix. 6; Rev. i. 8—Is the Father almighty? so is the Son, Heb. i. 3—Is the Father every where? so is the Son, Matt. xviii. 20—Doth the Father know all things? so doth the Son, John xxi. 17; ii. 24—Did the Father make all things? so did the Son, John i. 3—Doth the Father preserve all things? so doth the Son, Heb. i. 3—Doth the Father forgive sins? so doth the Son, Matt. ix. 6—Is the Father to be worshipped? so is the Son, Heb. i. 6—Is the Father to be honored? so is the Son, John v. 23. No wonder therefore that Christ, *being thus in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God*. He did not rob God of any glory by saying that himself was equal to him. The

greatest wonder is how any one can believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, and yet deny this great truth, than which nothing can be more plain from Scripture; nothing being more frequently and more clearly asserted than this is. And, verily, it is well for us that it is so; for if Christ were not God, neither could he be our Saviour; none being able to free us from our sins, but only he against whom they were committed. And therefore I cannot imagine how any one can doubt of Christ's divinity, and yet expect pardon and salvation from him; all our hopes and expectations from him depending only upon his assumption of our human nature into a divine Person.

And that the Holy Ghost also is God, is frequently asserted in the holy Scriptures which himself indited. Indeed his very inditing of the Scriptures was a clear argument of his Deity, as well as the Scriptures indited by him. What man, what angel, what creature, who but God could compose such articles of faith, enjoin such divine precepts, foretel and fulfil such prophecies, as in Scripture are contained? Who spake unto or by the prophets? Whom did they mean, when they said, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts*? Who was this Lord of hosts that instructed them what to speak or write? Was it God the Father, or God the Son? No, but it was God the Holy Ghost; *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. i. 21; Acts xxviii. 25; xxi. 11. The Holy Ghost therefore being the Lord of hosts, he must needs be God, there being no person that is or can be called the Lord of hosts, but he that is the very and eternal God. This also may be ga-

thered from 1 Cor. iii. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* for none can be the temple of God, but he in whom God dwells; for it is God's dwelling in a place that makes that place the temple of God; and yet we are here said to be the temple of God, because the Spirit dwelleth in us. And so elsewhere; *Know ye not, saith the apostle, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost that is in you?* which could not be unless the Holy Ghost was God. Another express Scripture we have for it in Acts v. 3, 4; where St. Peter propounds this question to Ananias, *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?* and then tells him in the next verse, *Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God*; and so expressly asserts the Holy Ghost to be God.

Moreover, that the Holy Ghost is truly God, co-equal to the Father and Son, is plain, in that the Scriptures assert him to be, to have, and to do whatsoever the Father or Son is, hath, or doth, as God. For is the Father and Son eternal? so is the Spirit, Heb. ix. 14—Is God the Father and Son every where? so is the Spirit, Psal. cxxxix. 7—Is God the Father and the Son a wise, understanding, powerful, and knowing God? so is the Spirit, Isa. xi. 2—Are we baptized in the name of the Father and the Son? so are we baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost—May we sin against the Father and the Son? so may we sin too against the Holy Ghost; nay, the sin against this Person only is accounted by our Saviour to be a sin never to be pardoned, Matt. xii. 31, 32. We may sin against God the Father, and our sin may be pardoned: we may sin against God the Son, and our sin may be pardoned; but if we sin or speak against the Holy Ghost, that shall *never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor yet in that which is to come*. But if the Holy Ghost be not God, how can we sin against him? or how comes our sin against him only to be unpardonable, unless he be God? I know it is not therefore unpardonable because he is God, for then the sins against the Father and the Son would be unpardonable too, seeing they both are God as well as he; yet, though this sin is not therefore unpardonable, because he is God, yet it could not be unpardonable unless he was God. For, supposing him not to be God but a creature, and yet the

sin against him to be unpardonable, then the sin against a creature would be unpardonable, when sins against God himself are pardoned; which is to say, would itself, I think, come near to the sin against the Holy Ghost. But seeing our Saviour describes this unpardonable sin, by blaspheming or speaking against the Holy Ghost, let them have a care that they be not found guilty of it, who dare deny the Holy Ghost to be really and truly God, and so blaspheme and speak the worst that they can against him.

We have seen what ground we have to believe that there are three persons in the Godhead, and that every one of these persons is God; we are now to consider the order of those persons in the Trinity, described in the words before us; first the Father, and then the Son, and then the Holy Ghost; every one of which is really and truly God; and yet they are all but one real and true God—a mystery which we are all bound to believe, but yet must have great care how we speak of it; it being both easy and dangerous to mistake in expressing so mysterious a truth as this is. If we think of it, how hard is it to contemplate upon one numerically divine nature, in more than one and the same divine person; or upon three divine persons in no more than one and the same divine nature! If we speak of it, how hard is it to find out fit words to express it! If I say, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be three, and every one distinctly God, it is true; but if I say, they be three and every one a distinct God, it is false. I may say, the divine persons are distinct in the divine nature; but I cannot say, that the divine nature is divided into the divine persons. I may say, God the Father is one God, and the Son is one God, and the Holy Ghost is one God; but I cannot say, that the Father is one God, and the Son another God, and the Holy Ghost a third God. I may say, the Father begat another who is God; yet I cannot say, that he begat another God. And from the Father and the Son proceedeth another who is God; yet I cannot say, from the Father and the Son proceedeth another God. For, all this while, though their nature be the same, their persons are distinct; and though their persons be distinct, still their nature is the same; so that though the Father be the first Person in the God-

head, the Son the second, the Holy Ghost the third, yet the Father is not the first, the Son a second, the Holy Ghost a third God. So hard a thing is it to word so great a mystery aright; or to fit so high a truth with expressions suitable and proper to it, without going one way or another from it. And therefore I shall not use many words about it, lest some should slip from me unbecoming of it; but, in as few terms as I can, I will endeavor to show, upon what account the Father is the first, the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost the third person in the Trinity.

First, therefore, the Father is placed first, and really is the first Person, not as if he were before the other two, for they are all co-eternal, but because the other two received their essence from him; for the Son was begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeded both from the Father and Son; and therefore the Father is termed by the primitive Christians, the Root and the Fountain of Deity. As in waters there is the fountain or well-head, then there is the spring that boils up out of that fountain, and then there is the stream that flows both from the fountain and the spring, and yet all these are but one and the same water; so here, God the Father is the fountain of Deity, the Son as the spring that boils up out of the fountain, and the Holy Ghost that flows from both, and yet all three are but one and the same God. The same may be also explained by another familiar instance. The sun, you know, begets beams, and from the sun and beams together proceed both light and heat; so God the Father begets the Son, and from the Father and Son together proceeds the Spirit of knowledge and grace. But as the sun is not before the beams, nor the beams before the light and heat, but all are together; so neither is the Father before the Son, nor Father or Son before the Holy Ghost, but only in order and relation to one another; in which only respect, the Father is the first Person in the Trinity.

Secondly, the Son is the second Person, who is called the Son, yea, and the only-begotten Son of God, because he was begotten of the Father, not as others are by spiritual regeneration, but by eternal generation, as none but himself is. . . . For the Person of the Son was most certainly begotten of the Father, otherwise he would not be his Son; but his essence

was unbegotten, otherwise he would not be God: and therefore the highest apprehensions that we can frame of this great mystery, the eternal generation of the Son of God, is only by conceiving the Person of the Father to have communicated his divine essence to the Person of the Son, and so of himself begetting his other self the Son, by communicating his own eternal and unbegotten essence to him—I say, by communicating of his essence, not of his person to him, for then they would be both the same person, as now they are of the same essence. The essence of the Father did not beget the son by communicating his person to him, but the person of the Father begat the Son by communicating his essence to him; so that the person of the Son is begotten, not communicated; but the essence of the Son is communicated, not begotten.

This notion of the Father's begetting the Son by communicating his essence to him, I ground upon the Son's own words, who certainly best knew how himself was begotten; *For as the Father, saith he, hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself*, John v. 26. To have life in himself is an essential property of the Divine nature, and therefore wheresoever that is given or communicated, the nature itself must needs be given and communicated too. Now here we see how God the Father communicated this his essential property, and so his essence, to the Son; and, by consequence, though he be a distinct person from him, yet he hath the same unbegotten essence with him; and therefore, as the Father hath life in himself, so hath the Son life in himself, and so all other essential properties of the Divine nature, only with this personal distinction, that the Father hath life in himself, not from the Son, but from himself; whereas the Son hath it, not from himself, but from the Father: or, the Father is God of himself, not of the Son; the Son is the same God, but from the Father, not from himself; and therefore, not the Father, but the Son, is rightly called by the council of Nice, "God of God, Light of Light," yea, "very God of very God."

Thirdly; having thus spoken of the two first persons in the sacred Trinity, we now come to the last, the Holy Ghost—the last, I say, not in nature or time, but only in order; for as to their nature, one

is not better or more God than another; neither as to time, is one before another, none of them being measured by time, but all and every one of them eternity itself. But though not in nature or time, yet in order one must needs be before another: for the Father is of himself, receiving his essence neither from the Son nor from the Spirit, and therefore is in order before both; the Son received his essence from the Father, not from the Spirit, and therefore in order is before the Spirit, as well as after the Father; but the Spirit receiving his essence both from the Father and the Son, must needs in order be after both. I confess, the Spirit is no where in Scripture said to proceed from the Son, and therefore the inserting of this into the Nicene creed was the occasion of that schism betwixt the western and eastern churches, which hath now continued for many ages; in which, I think, both parties are blame-worthy—the western churches for inserting this clause following into the Nicene creed, without the consent of a general council; and the eastern for denying so plain a truth as this is; for though the Spirit be not said to proceed from the Son, yet he is called *the Spirit of the Son*, which questionless he would never have been, did not he proceed from the Son as well as from the Father. And, verily, the Father communicating his own individual essence, and so whatsoever he is, his paternal relation excepted, to the Son, could not but communicate this to him also, even to have the Spirit proceeding from him as it doth from himself. So that as whatsoever the Father hath originally in himself, that hath the Son by communication from the Father, so hath the Son this, the Spirit's proceeding from him by communication from the Father, as the Father hath it in himself; and the Spirit thus proceeding both from the Father and the Son, hence it is that he is placed after both, in Matt. xxviii. 19; and so elsewhere.

From what I have hitherto discoursed concerning this great mystery, the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity, I shall gather some few inferences, and so conclude.

1. Is the Son God, yea, the same God with the Father? Hence I observe, what a strange mystery the work of man's redemption is, that God himself should become man—and he that was begotten of

his Father, without a mother, from eternity, should be born of his mother, without a father, in time—that he who was perfect God, like unto the Father in every thing, his personal properties only excepted, should also be perfect man, like unto us in all things, our personal infirmities only excepted—that he that made the world, should be himself made in it—that eternity should stoop to time, glory be wrapt in misery, and the Sun of righteousness hid under a clod of earth—that innocence should be betrayed, justice condemned, and life itself should die, and all to redeem man from death to life! O wonder of wonders! how justly may we say with the apostle, *Without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness!*

2. Is the Spirit also God? Hence I observe, that it is God alone that can make us holy; for seeing the Scripture all along ascribes our sanctification unto the Spirit of God, and yet the Spirit of God is himself really and truly God, it necessarily followeth, that the special concurrence and influence of the Almighty God himself is necessary to the making us really and truly holy.

3. Are all three persons in the Trinity one and the same God? Hence I infer, they are to have one and the same honor conferred upon them, and one and the same worship performed unto them; or, as our Saviour himself saith, *that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father*, John v. 23: and, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*, John xiv. 1. And as we pray to the Father, so should we pray to the Son too, as the apostles did, Luke xvii. 5; and St. Stephen, Acts vii. 59; and St. Paul to all the three persons, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

BP. BEVERIDGE.

Reasonableness of our Belief of the Trinity, in a Dialogue between a Papist and a Protestant.

P. I shall reduce these difficulties to two, which comprehend the rest.

1. How there can be three Persons and but one God.

2. How these can agree in a third, and not agree among themselves.

For the first, it seems very absurd, that there should be three Persons really distinct, whereof every one is God, and yet there should not be three Gods; for nothing is more contradictory than to make

three not to be three, or three to be but one.

Pr. I hope now you will give me leave to make an answer to your difficulty as distinct as possible. We do not say that three persons are but one person, or that one nature is three natures; but that there are three persons in one nature. If therefore one individual nature be communicable to three persons, there is no appearance of absurdity in this doctrine. And on the other side, it will be impossible there should be three Gods, where there is one and the same individual nature; for three Gods must have three several divine natures, since it is the divine essence which makes a God. But to make this more plain, do you make any difference between *nature* and *person*?

P. Yes.

Pr. Wherein lies it?

P. Excuse me, sir, for you have undertaken to explain these things.

Pr. I will begin with *person*. Which name was originally taken among the Romans from some remarkable distinction of one from another, either by some outward appearance, as a vizard or habit, or some particular quality or disposition. And from hence it came to be applied to those inward properties, whereby one intelligent being is distinguished from another; and from those properties, to the person who had them. Thus *person* is used even by Tully himself at least twenty times in his books of Rhetoric; and the old civil law speaks of *personal rights* and *personal actions*. So that the critics, such as Valla, and others, had no cause to find fault with Boethius for applying the notion of a person to an 'intelligent being subsisting in itself,' (and so the soul is no person in men, but the man consisting of soul and body,) 'having some incommunicable properties belonging to him:' therefore I cannot but wonder at the niceness of some late men, who would have the names of *person*, and *hypostasis*, and *Trinity*, to be laid aside, since themselves confess Boethius his definition of a person to be true enough; but they say, 'it belongs to the creatures, and not to God, for it would make three Gods.' Which is to suppose, without proving it, that the Divine nature can communicate itself after no other manner than a created nature can.

This is now to be more strictly inquired into. And it is very well observed by

Boethius, *de Trin.* l. i. *Principium pluralitatis alteritas est*: 'That diversity is the reason of plurality:' and therefore in the Trinity, so far as they are different, they are three, i. e. in regard of personal properties and relations; but so far as they agree, they are but ONE, that is, as to the Divine nature.

It is very true, that, according to arithmetic, three cannot be one, nor one three; but we must distinguish between the bare numeration and the things numbered. The repetition of three units certainly makes three distinct numbers; but it doth not make three persons to be three natures. And therefore, as to the things themselves, we must go from the bare numbers, to consider their nature. Wherever there is a real distinction, we may multiply the number, though the subject be but one. As, suppose we say the soul hath three faculties; understanding, will, and memory; we may, without the least absurdity, say, there are three and one; and those three not confounded with each other, and yet there is but one soul.

P. But the Socinians object, that there is a difference between three properties and three distinct persons; because a person is an individual being; and so three persons must be three individual beings; and therefore as there is but one Divine Being, there can be but one Person.

Pr. This is the main strength of the cause; to which I answer, that although a person be an individual being, yet it implies two things in it: (1.) Something common with others of the same nature; as three men have one and the same nature, though they be three persons. (2.) Something peculiar and incommunicate to any other; so that John cannot be Peter, nor Peter, James.

P. But what is it which makes one not to be the other, when they have the same common nature?

Pr. You ask a hard question, viz. about the principle of individuation; but if it be so hard to resolve it, as to created beings, there is certainly far less reason for us to be unsatisfied, if it appear difficult to clear the difference of nature and person in an infinite Being. Yet all mankind are agreed in the thing, viz. That there is a community of the same nature, and a real distinction of persons among men, though they cannot tell what that is which discriminates the human nature in John, from the same human nature in Peter and James.

And it is observable, that, as beings arise in perfection above each other, it is still so much harder to assign that which is called the principle of individuation. In gross and material beings we can discern a number of accidents, or peculiar modes and properties, which distinguish them from each other; but it is much harder to assign it in spiritual and intellectual beings, whose natures and differences lie not so open to our understandings. If so be then it appears more difficult in an infinite and incomprehensible Being, what cause have we to wonder at it?

But we must always make a difference between what we have reason to believe, and what we have a power to conceive. Although we have all the reason in the world to believe that there is a God, i. e. a Being infinite in all perfections; yet we must yield, that his essential attributes are above our comprehension. As for instance :

(1.) We must believe God to be eternal, or we cannot believe him to be God; for if he once were not, it is impossible he should ever be; and therefore we conclude necessary existence to be an essential attribute of the Divine nature: but then, how to conceive that a being should be from itself, is at least as hard, as how one and the same individual nature should be communicated to three distinct persons; nay, it is somewhat harder, since we see something like this in other beings, but we can see no manner of resemblance of a thing that hath its being wholly from itself.

(2.) We must allow God to be omnipresent, or else we must suppose him so confined and limited to a certain place, as to be excluded from any other; and if he can act in all places, he must either be present in them, or his power must be larger than his being, which is infinite; but after this, we have not a power to conceive how a Being should be present in the whole world, and not to be extended; and if it be extended, how it should be incapable of being divided into parts, which is certainly repugnant to the divine nature. I therefore produce these two instances, to let the Anti-Trinitarians see, that what they object in point of reason, as to the incomprehensibility of the mystery of the Trinity, will in consequence overthrow the divine nature. But as there is the highest reason to believe there is a God, though we cannot comprehend his perfections, so there may be great reason

to believe the doctrine of the Trinity, though we cannot comprehend the manner of it.

P. I had thought you intended to explain the mystery of it, and now you tell us it is incomprehensible.

Pr. It is a good step to our believing it, to make it plain, that the difficulty of our conception ought not to hinder our faith. And I have made some advance towards the explication of it, by showing, that since mankind are agreed about the difference between *nature* and *person*, the whole difficulty comes to this, that the same common nature in mankind makes three persons; but that it is the same individual nature in all the persons of the Trinity.

And now let us consider the infinite perfection and simplicity of the divine nature; and we shall think it unreasonable that it should be bounded as to the manner of its communication, as the nature of man is. Every individual man hath not only individual properties, but an individual nature, i. e. the common nature of man, limited by some unaccountable principle, that doth make him different from all other men having the same nature with himself. The difficulty then doth not lie in a community of nature, and a distinction of persons, for that is granted among men; but in the unity of nature with the difference of persons. And supposing the Divine nature to be infinite in its perfection, I do not see how it is capable of being bounded as the common nature of man in individuals is; and if it be not capable of being bounded and limited, it must diffuse itself into all the persons in the same individual manner; and so this doctrine of the Trinity is not repugnant to reason.

P. But what say you to the Athanasian creed; is not that repugnant to human reason?

Pr. I think not; but that it is a just explication of the doctrine of the Trinity rightly understood.

P. I see, now you are upon hard points, you will stick at nothing, and transubstantiation itself will down with you anon.

Pr. I doubt not; but at present we are upon the Athanasian creed. And I desire but one principle to clear it, which follows from what is said already, viz. That what is affirmed of the Divine nature, as such, must be common to all three Persons; but whatever is affirmed of the seve-

ral Persons, as such, must be peculiar to themselves. Now this is a clear principle of reason, and hath no appearance of absurdity in it. And from hence the Athanasian creed will easily be cleared. For *eternity, incomprehensibility, omnipotency*, belonging to the Divine nature, as such, we ought to say, *That they are not three Eternals, three Incomprehensibles, three Almighty: but one Eternal, one Incomprehensible, one Almighty.* Because the attributes belonging to the Persons, by reason of the Divine nature, and the attributes being really the same with it, the nature is the proper subject of them, which being but one, we are not to distinguish them as to essential attributes, but only as to personal relations and properties.

P. But if the three Persons be coeternal, how is it possible to conceive there should not be three eternals?

Pr. This seems the hardest expression in the whole creed; but it is to be interpreted by the scope and design of it, which is, that the essential attributes are not to be distinguished, though the Persons be. And so eternity is not taken as a personal attribute, but as essential; and so *they are not three Eternals, but one Eternal.* And the great design of the creed was, to show, that the Christian church did not believe such a Trinity as consisted of three Persons, unequal and different in nature, and substance, and duration.

P. But what say you to the damning all those who do not believe it, in the beginning and end of it?

Pr. This is off from our business. But to let you see I will not avoid the difficulties you offer, I will give you an answer even to this. The meaning is not, that every one is damned who doth not conceive aright of the difference of nature and person in the Trinity, or of the essential and personal attributes; but that those who set up in opposition to it the worship of a mere creature as God, or the worship of more gods than one, or who wilfully reject this article of the Christian faith, when it is duly proposed to them, are guilty of a damning sin. For even the disbelief of Christianity itself is not supposed to be the cause of men's damnation, but where the doctrine of the gospel hath been proposed in a way of credibility. If, when this doctrine of the Trinity is proposed to men's minds, they will not consider it, nor weigh the arguments on both sides impar-

tially, but with scorn and contempt reject it, and endeavour to bring reproach upon Christianity for the sake of it, and disturb the peace of the church about it; such cannot be said to receive or believe it faithfully, and by such sins they do run the hazard of perishing everlastingly.

P. I see you have a mind to smooth every thing relating to the Trinity; I wish you would do the same about transubstantiation. But yet you have not answered the other great difficulty in point of reason, viz. That those things which agree or disagree in a third, must agree or disagree with the other. And therefore if the Father be God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, then the Father must be Son and Holy Ghost, and the Son and Holy Ghost must be the Father. If not, then they are really the same, and really distinct; the same as to essence, distinct as to persons; and so they are the same, and not the same, which is a contradiction.

Pr. And now I think you have drawn out the most refined spirits of Socinianism, to make the doctrine of the Trinity and transubstantiation parallel, because you say, it implies a contradiction, which is the nearest parallel you have yet offered at. But this terrible argument is grounded on the same supposition, viz. That the divine essence is no more capable of communicating itself to three distinct persons, than any created being is. The reason of that axiom being, that created things, by reason of their finite nature, cannot diffuse or communicate themselves to more than one; and therefore those which agree in a third, must agree together; but supposing it possible that the same finite nature could extend itself to several individuals, it would be presently answered, the axiom did hold only where they did adequately and reciprocally agree, and not where they did agree only in essence, but differed in the manner of subsistence. For where a different manner of subsistence is supposed possible in the same individual nature, the agreement in that cannot take away that difference which is consistent with it, which we attribute to the unlimitedness and perfection of the divine nature.

P. But you can bring no other instance but the thing in question; and therefore this is a *petitio principii*, or taking that for granted which is in dispute.

Pr. I do not think it to be so, where

the reason is assigned from the peculiar properties of the divine nature, to which there can be no parallel. And I think it very unreasonable in the Socinians, to send us to created beings for the rules and measures of our judgment concerning a Being acknowledged to be infinite.

P. Are not the divine Persons infinite, as well as the divine nature? and therefore as created persons do take in the whole nature, so infinite persons will do the infinite nature.

Pr. No question, but the persons are infinite in regard of the nature which is so; but if an infinite nature be communicable to more persons than one, every such person cannot appropriate the whole nature to itself.

P. If the difference be on the account of infinity, then there must be an infinite number of persons in the divine essence.

Pr. I answer, That infiniteness of number is no perfection; and as to the number of persons, we follow not our own conjectures, nor the authority of the church; but divine revelation, which hath assured us, that there is but *one God*, and yet *there are three that are one*; which depends not merely on the place of St. John, but the form of baptism is remarkable to this purpose, which joins together *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, without any other distinction besides that of order and relation. And it is against the fundamental design of Christianity to join any created beings together with God in so solemn an act of religion. And St. Paul joins them together in his benediction; *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen.* 2 Cor. xiii. 14. From whence the Christian Church hath always believed a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Nature.

BP. STILLINGFLEET.

Necessity and use of the Doctrine of the Trinity.

IF you consider man in the state under which the Scripture represents him, lost to God and to himself, the slave of passion, and the servant of sin, equally unable to govern himself, and to serve his Maker; you will then see the want there was of a Mediator, to be the Ambassador of our peace, and to reconcile us to God; you will then see the want there was of the Holy Spirit's influence to enable us to subdue

those unruly passions and appetites, which were a partition-wall between us and our God; that we might serve our Maker in spirit and in truth, and *perfect holiness in the fear of God*.

Give me leave to stay here a little, to represent to you the economy of God in the gospel dispensation, which the apostle, in the text, has shut up in a few words; *We have access to God, through Christ, by the Spirit*. To give you a distinct conception of this, and of the different offices of the Son and of the Spirit, you must conceive the Spirit of God as always present with us; the Son, as always in the presence of the Father. The Spirit dwells with the faithful, to guide and to direct them, to second and encourage all their good desires, to help them in overcoming their infirmities; in a word, to labour together with them in the work of their salvation, to make their calling and election sure. The Son of God is at the right hand of the Majesty on high; there he is our Advocate; he intercedes for us, he receives and offers up our prayers, he obtains for us the remission of our sins in virtue of the one oblation which he once made of himself upon the cross, the memorial of which is ever in the sight of God. This will teach us what it is to *have access by the Spirit, through Christ*. For the Spirit abideth with us, he is at our right hand, and by his happy influence it is that we draw near to Christ, and by him approach to the Father. The Son is our High-priest, clothed with majesty and power, and seated at the right hand of God, able to save all who will come to him; through whose powerful and always prevailing mediation and intercession the way is opened to pardon and reconciliation. The Spirit is our Comforter, given us to dwell and to abide with us, to be a principle of new life within us, to *quicken our mortal bodies*, that, dying to sin, we may live unto God through holiness. To draw men to God is the work of the Spirit, who therefore resides and dwells with men; to reconcile God to man is the work of our High-priest, who lives in the glory of God, making continual intercession for us.

And now, consider the calamitous condition of mankind under what view you please, you will always find a proper remedy provided by the mercy of God. If you reflect upon the holiness of God, and

his hatred of sin and iniquity, and begin to fear that he can never be reconciled to sinners; take courage: the work is difficult, but the Son of God has undertaken it; and how great soever the distance between God and you is, yet through the Son you may have access unto him. If still you fear for yourself that all may again be lost, through your own weakness, and inability to do good; even here help is at hand, the Spirit of God is your support; he is the pledge and earnest of your redemption. But, these being the necessary means of salvation, it was likewise necessary to reveal to the world the doctrines concerning the Son and the Holy Spirit: and the belief of these doctrines is necessary to every Christian, as far as the right use of the means depends upon the right faith and belief of the doctrines. *He that hath the Son*, (says St. John) *hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life*; and again, *Whosoever denieth the Son, hath not the Father*. For since we can only come to the Father through the Son, to deny the Son is to cut off all communication between us and the Father. The same may be said of the blessed Spirit, through whom we are in Christ: *If any man* (says St. Paul) *have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*: our blessed Lord has himself told us, that *This is eternal life, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent*.

When we were to be put under the conduct of the Spirit, and all our hopes depended upon our obedience to, and compliance with, his holy motions; was it not necessary to inform us who this Spirit is? to let us know that he is sufficient to the office allotted him: that, knowing perfectly the mind of God, even as the spirit of a man knoweth the things of a man, he is able fully to instruct us and to direct us in the ways of God; that, being infinite, and unconfined in time or place, he is equal to the extensive charge committed to his care, and can be ready at all times, and in all places, to succour the faithful servants of God; that, being *the Spirit of power and of might*, he is able to rescue us out of all dangers, and protect us against all the powers and principalities of the kingdom of darkness? It may be hard perhaps to human reason to conceive, that this Holy Spirit is the eternal Spirit of God, and so intimately united with God,

as to know the mind of God as perfectly as the spirit of a man which is in him knoweth the mind of man; but it would be harder still to believe that the Spirit could do what is ascribed to him in Scripture, without believing him to be this great and glorious Person. It is a more rational act of faith, to expect from the Eternal Spirit of God the sanctification of our souls and bodies, spiritual aid and assistance in all our trials and temptations, and whatever else is necessary to our salvation, than it would be to expect the same things from any other spirit, of whose power and attributes we knew nothing. The power and mightiness of the Spirit, made known to us by God, is a reasonable, a just foundation for the hope and confidence we have in him; but, were we ignorant of his power, our trust in him would be without ground; and we should lose this boasting, which is now the glory of our faith, that *we know in whom we have believed*. Since, therefore, by the determinate counsel of God, the redemption of the world was to be the work of his Son, and the sanctification of it the work of his Spirit; he has dealt with us more like reasonable creatures, in declaring to us the dignity and power of the Persons in whom we are to trust, than he would have done, had he required of us the same faith and reliance on those Persons, without declaring to us how able and powerful they are to help us. If therefore it be reasonable for God to save the world, by redeeming it by his Son, by sanctifying it by his Holy Spirit, it cannot be unreasonable for him to make known his Son and his Spirit to the world, that all men every where may by the one Spirit of God, and through the only Son of God, approach to the Father. And this shows how foolishly men charge God, when they complain of the heavy imposition laid upon their faith and their understanding by the Gospel doctrines concerning the Son and the Holy Spirit. God has revealed this for our sakes only, not for matter of speculation, or for the enlarging of our knowledge; but that, having a reasonable ground of assurance and hope in him, we may, through faith and patient abiding, inherit the promises. BP. SHERLOCK.

How this Doctrine has suffered from its Defenders as well as Adversaries.

It is to be feared, that the doctrine of

the Trinity has suffered from its defenders as well as from its adversaries. The moment we attempt to clear up a difficulty which the Scriptures have not cleared, that moment we abandon our only safe guide, and plunge into the darkness of error. Most persons, we think, will have found fewer difficulties in the Scriptural statements on this subject, though they attempt not to explain the mystery, than in any human writings. Yet the adversaries of the doctrine compelled the church to the adoption of such a statement as the Athanasian Creed, to protect Christians from the sophistries of subtle and artful objectors. Humble and simple minds have found few difficulties in the reception of the Trinity. They take the practical and experimental view of the subject which is far more clear and satisfactory than the scholastic, systematic, speculative view of many orthodox statements, such as those of Waterland and others. It is never stated as a mere speculative dogma, however important, but in connexion with our own privileges and duties, as the objects of our faith and worship, Matt. xxviii. 19. as the source of all spiritual blessings, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Rev. i. 4, 5. as bearing their respective parts in the divine economy in every act of approach to God, Eph. ii. 18. We would not wholly decry the human attempts to set forth the doctrine; yet the clearest scholastic exhibition is far inferior in distinctness to the simple experimental view which is developed in the believer's spiritual apprehension of the gospel. We would not despise the light of a candle, though obscured with comparative dimness, but we would rather go to the sun for light, and we should justly expect to find not only a wide difference in the clearness of our views, but also in the vivifying effect resulting from them.

REV. E. BICKERSTETH.

The Gracious Method of Co-operation of Three Persons in Jehovah in our Salvation.

1. WE should set our mind on God the Father, before the foundation of the world from all eternity, pleasing to forecast with himself the creation of us, and communication of his own image to us; endowing us with most excellent faculties of body and soul; subjecting the visible world to our use and governance; placing us in a state of great accommodation and delight;

permitting us to fall, that he might raise us to a higher and better condition, resolving to send his own dear Son from his bosom to procure and purchase the redemption of mankind; preparing and disposing the world for the reception of so great a mercy, by a general testification of his patience and beneficence, (*giving showers, and fruitful seasons, and filling the hearts of men with food and gladness*, Acts xiv. 17.) but more especially by prophetic promises, predictions, and prefigurations; also suffering the generality of mankind so to proceed in its ways, as might render it sensible of its error and unhappiness, of the need and benefit of a deliverance; *then in the fulness of time, when the creature did earnestly groan, and long for its recovery from vanity and slavery*, Gal. iv. 4, Rom. viii. 22, actually sending his only Son, and clothing him with human flesh, that conversing with us, he might discover to us his gracious intentions toward us, might confirm the truth thereof by miraculous works, might instruct us by his heavenly doctrine and holy life in our duty, and the terms of our salvation; then freely delivering him over unto death, and accepting his passion as a sacrifice expiating our sins, and meriting his favor toward us: then raising him as *the first fruits* from the dead, setting him at his right hand, investing him with authority to govern and save those who sincerely would believe in him, and faithfully obey him; also sending and bestowing his Holy Spirit to dwell in them, to conduct, confirm, and comfort them in the ways of truth and righteousness. These, with manifold other intercurrent passages of gracious Providence, ascribed to God the Father, we should seriously mind, and so resent, as to be ravished with admiration of his mercy; to be inflamed with love of his goodness; to be possessed with gratitude toward him; to become thoroughly devoted to his service.

2. We should likewise mind the blessed Son of God concurring with his Father in all his purposes of love and mercy toward us, in making all things, and sustaining them by the word of his power; but especially in his (toward the freeing us from the desperate miseries, corruptions, and slaveries, into which we were plunged) assuming human nature, leading therein a troublesome and toilsome life, for our benefit and instruction; undergoing a

bitter and shameful death, for the atonement of our sins, and reconciliation of us to divine favor; purchasing great and precious promises, procuring high and glorious privileges for us; ascending into heaven to prepare us mansions of bliss; interceding for us with God, and pouring from above manifold blessings upon us: the astonishing miracles of goodness, of wisdom, of condescension and patience, displayed in the management of which undertakings for us, what heart can well conceive, what tongue can utter? What amazement should it produce in us to consider the brightest efflux of divine glory eclipsing and shrouding itself under so dark a cloud of mortal frailty; the Most High stooping into the quality of so mean a creature; the first-born, and heir-apparent of heaven descending from his throne of eternal majesty, and voluntarily degrading himself into the *form of a servant*, worn with labor and travel, exposed to contempt and disgrace! To reflect upon the great Creator and sovereign Lord of all the world, who reared the heavens, and founded the earth, who possesseth and upholdeth all things, needing himself a shelter, pinched with want, taking alms from his slaves, and paying tribute to his subjects: to contemplate the Son of God willingly *styling* himself the *Son of Man*, really subjecting himself to the duties, the necessities, the infirmities of human nature; suffering the coarsest hardships, and extremest disasters thereof; all this upon freest choice, and with full contentment, and perfect submission to so mean and so distasteful a condition.

We may observe with how admirable goodness he did vouchsafe to converse with a froward generation of men, to instruct a stupid and indocile sort of people, with all sorts of beneficence to oblige an incredulous, insensible, and ungrateful crew; with how invincible a meekness and patience he *endured the contradiction of sinners*; the scornful reproaches, the wrongful calumnies, the spiteful and cruel usages of the envious and malicious world; being to the highest extremity despised, hated, maligned, and abused by those whom he had most highly honored, most affectionately loved, and conferred the greatest favors upon. We may with astonishment contemplate that strange contest between divine patience and human wickedness, striving which of them should excel; when we do peruse and weigh those

enigmatical passages, God accused by man of blasphemy, the eternal wisdom aspersed with folly, truth itself impleaded of imposture, essential love made guilty of mischief, and supreme goodness styled a malefactor; infinite power beat down, and trampled upon by impotent malice; the judge of all the world, the fountain of all authority and right, arraigned, condemned, and executed for injustice; the *desire of all nations* rejected by his own country and kindred; the joy of paradise (whose light-some countenance doth cheer heaven itself) almost overwhelmed with grief, uttering lamentable groans, tortured with grievous agonies; the very heart of God bleeding, and the sole Author of life expiring.

We may farther study Jesus with compassion and tears, pitying not these his own sufferings, but for the vengeance for them due and decreed unto his persecutors; we should mark him excusing their fault, and praying for their pardon; dying willingly for their good, when he died violently by their hand; passionately desiring their salvation, when they maliciously procured his destruction.

We should mind all the actions of the Son of God, our Saviour, with the most wise grounds, endearing circumstances, and precious fruits of them; his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession; as containing instances of the greatest charity and humility possible showed unto us, as arguments of the greatest love and gratitude due from us. Mind them we should most seriously, so as to be heartily affected with them, so as to esteem worthily the transcendent honor done us by God assuming our nature, and exalting us to a conjunction with the divine nature; so as to be deeply sensible of our obligation to so immense a charity, that could do and suffer so much for us, without any desert of ours, yea notwithstanding our exceedingly bad deserts, our rebellions and enmities against him; so as to detest the heinousness of our sins, that needed so mighty an expiation, that caused so horrid a tragedy; so as not to neglect so great salvation so frankly offered, so dearly purchased for us; not to frustrate the designs of so unconceivable love and goodness, so as to obey readily so gracious a master, to follow carefully so admirable an example; so as in imitation of him, and for his sake, to be meek, and humble in heart, and in deed, seeing he did so infinitely condescend and abase himself for

us; to be patient and submissive to his will, who stooped so low, and suffered so much for us; so as to bear a general affection to mankind, grounded like his, not upon any particular interests, nor limited by any partial respects, but extended freely, in real desire and intention, toward all; liberally to impart the good things we possess, and patiently to brook the crosses we meet with, and heartily to forgive the offences done to us; for that he freely did part with the greatest glories of eternity, with the highest dignities, and the richest treasures of heaven for our sake; when we were *enemies in our minds by wicked works, dead in trespasses and sins*, guilty of numberless grievous offences against him, by his blood redeeming us from wrath, reconciling us to the mercy and favor of God.

3. We should also meditate upon the blessed Spirit of God, with equal goodness conspiring, and co-operating with all the purposes, to all the effects of grace, which conduce to our everlasting happiness; more especially as the repairer of our decayed frames, the enlivener of our dead souls, the infuser of spiritual light into our dark minds, the kindler of spiritual warmth in our cold hearts; the raiser of spiritual appetite to righteousness, and the relish of goodness in our stupid senses; the imparters of spiritual strength and vigor to our feeble powers; the author of all liberty, loosing us from captivity under the tyranny of Satan, from vassalage unto our own carnal lusts and passions; from subjection to a hard and imperious law, from bondage to the terrors of a guilty conscience:—as him, that enableth us to perform the duties, and accomplish the conditions required of us in order to our salvation, that qualifyeth us to be the sons of God by his effectual grace, and assureth us that we are so by his comfortable testimony; as our sure guide in the ways of truth and virtue; our faithful counsellor in all doubts and darknesses; our mighty support and succour in all needs, in all distresses; our ready guard against all assaults and temptations; our sweet comforter in all sadnesses and afflictions: who doth insinuate good thoughts, doth kindle holy desires, doth cherish pious resolutions, doth further honest endeavours in us: who only doth inflame our hearts with devotion toward God; doth encourage, doth enable us to approach unto him; doth prompt us with fit matter of request, and becometh

advocate for the good success of our prayers.

We should mind him as the root of all good fruits growing in us, or sprouting from us; the producer of all good habits formed in us, the assister of all good works performed by us; the spring of all true content that we enjoy; to whom our embracing the faith, our continuing in hope, our working in charity, the purification of our hearts, the mortification of our lusts, the sanctification of our lives, the salvation of our souls are principally due, are most justly ascribed:—as the author and preserver of so inestimable benefits unto us, let us mind him; and withal let us consider him as condescending to be a loving friend and constant guest to so mean and unworthy creatures; vouchsafing to attend over us, to converse with us, to dwell in us, rendering our souls holy temples of his divinity, royal thrones of his majesty, bright orbs of his heavenly light, pleasant paradises of his blissful presence; our souls, which naturally are profane receptacles of wicked and impure affections, dark cells of false and fond imaginations, close prisons of black and sad thoughts:—as graciously striving with us, striving to open and enter into our hearts, barred against him by vain conceits, and vicious inclinations; striving to reclaim us from the sins and errors into which we are wont heedlessly or wilfully to precipitate ourselves; striving to make us, what in all duty and wisdom we should be, capable of divine favor, and fit for everlasting happiness:—as enduring patiently manifold displeasures and disrespects from us; our rude oppositions against him, our frequent neglects of his kind admonitions; our many perverse humors, wanton freaks, wilful miscarriages, and unworthy dealings toward him.

We should thus mind the blessed Spirit of God, and be suitably affected toward him; so as to be duly sensible of and thankful for those inexpressible gifts and blessings indulged to us by him, so as to render all love and reverence, all praise and glory, all obedience and service to him, especially so as to admit him cheerfully into our hearts; yea, invite him thither by our earnest prayers; to make fit preparations for his reception and entertainment (by cleansing our hearts from all loathsome impurities) to make him welcome, and treat him kindly, with all civil respect, with all humble observance; not

grieving and vexing him by our distasteful crossness and peevishness, not tempting him by our fond presumption, or base treachery; not extinguishing his heavenly light and holy fire by our foul lusts, our damp stupidities, our cold neglects, our neglects to foment and nourish them by the food of devout meditations and zealous desires:—so let us mind him, as to admit gladly his gentle illapses, to delight in his most pleasant society, to hearken to his faithful suggestions, to comply with all his kindly motions, to behave ourselves modestly, consistently, and officiously toward him.

Thus should we employ our mind, all the faculties of our soul, our understanding, our will, our affections upon the blessed Trinity, the supreme of all things above, the founder of that celestial society, into which as Christians we are inserted; the sovereign of that heavenly kingdom to which we are subjects; the fountain of all the good and happiness we can hope for in that superior state. To the performance of which duty there be arguments and inducements innumerable; it is the most proper and connatural object of our mind, that for which it is fittest, and for which it was designed; the best intelligible, and infinitely most amiable of all things. It is the most worthy and noble object, the contemplation of which, and affection whereto, will most elevate, most enrich, most adorn, most enlarge the capacities, and most satisfy the appetites of our souls. It is the most sweet and pleasant object, wherein all light, all beauty, all perfection do shine; the sight and love of which do constitute paradise, and beatify heaven itself. It is the most useful and beneficial object of our mind, which will best instruct us in what it concerneth us to know, will most incite us to those duties which we are obliged to perform, will be most efficacious to the begetting in us those dispositions which are indispensably requisite for the attainment, and for the enjoyment of that everlasting bliss; unto which that one blessed Unity, and glorious Trinity in its infinite mercy bring us all: To whom be all glory, honor, and praise for ever. Amen.

DR. BARROW.

The equal obligation of Believers to Three Persons in Jehovah.

THAT God the Father should design such a Redemption for us; *not sparing his*

own Son, but delivering him up for us, to be thus dealt with for our sake: that God would endure to see his Son in so pitiful a condition, to hear him groaning under so grievous pressures, to let him be so horribly abused; and that for us, who deserved nothing from him, who had deserved so much against him; for us, who were no friends to him, (for *even when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, Rom. v. 10;) who were not any ways commendable for goodness or righteousness: (for *Christ did suffer for sinners, the just for the unjust*; and *God commended his love to us, that while we were sinful, Christ died for us*;) that God thus should *love us, sending his Son to be a propitiation for our sins*, in so dismal a way of suffering, how stupendous is that goodness! how vast an obligation doth it lay upon us to reciprocal affection! If we do owe all to God, as our Maker, from whose undeserved bounty we did receive all that we have; how much farther do we stand indebted to him as the Author of our Redemption, from whose ill-deserved mercy we receive a new being, and a better state; and that in a way far more obliging? For God created us with a word, without more cost or trouble: but to redeem us, stood him in huge expenses and pains; no less than the debasing his only Son to our frailty, the exposing him to more than our misery, the withdrawing his face, and restraining his bowels from his best beloved. If a Jew then were commanded by law, if a Gentile were obliged by nature, to *love God with all his heart and all his soul*; what affection doth a Christian, under the law and duty of grace, owe unto him? By what computation can we reckon that debt? What faculties have we sufficient to discharge it? What finite heart can hold an affection commensurate to such an obligation?

And how can it otherwise than inflame our heart with love toward the blessed Son of God, our Saviour, to consider that merely out of charitable pity toward us, he purposely came down from heaven, and took our flesh upon him, that he might therein undergo those extreme acerbities of pain, and those most ugly indignities of shame for us? *Greater love* (said he) *hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*: but that God should lay down his life, should pour

forth his blood, should be aspersed with the worst crimes, and clothed with foulest shame, should be executed on a cross as a malefactor and a slave, for his enemies and rebellious traitors, what imagination can devise any expression of charity or friendship comparable to this! Wherefore if love naturally be productive of love, if friendship justly meriteth a correspondence in good-will, what effect should the consideration of so ineffable a love, of so unparalleled friendship, have upon us?

How can any serious reflection on this event fail to work hearty gratitude in us toward our good Lord? For, put case, any person for our sake (that he might rescue us from the greatest mischiefs, and purchase for us the highest benefits) willingly should deprive himself of all his estate, (and that a very large one,) of his honor, (and that a very high one,) of his ease and pleasure, (and those the most perfect and assured that could be); that he should expose himself to the greatest hazards, should endure the sorest pains, and most disgraceful ignominies; should prostitute his life, and in most hideous manner lose it, merely for our sake:—should we not then apprehend and confess ourselves monstrously ungrateful, if we did not most deeply resent such kindness; if upon all occasions we did not express our thankfulness for it; if we did not ever readily yield all the acknowledgment and all the requital we were able? The case in regard to our blessed Saviour is like in kind; but in degree, whatever we can suppose doth infinitely fall below the performances of him for us, who stooped from the top of heaven, who laid aside the majesty and the felicity of God for the infamies and the dolours of a cross, that he might redeem us from the torments of hell, and instate us in the joys of Paradise. So that our obligations of gratitude to him are inexpressibly great; and we cannot with any face deny ourselves to be most basely unworthy, if the effects in our heart and life be not answerable. Nor should we forget, that also upon this account we do owe great love and thanks to God the Holy Ghost, who, as he did originally conspire in the wonderful project of our redemption, as he did executively by miraculous operation conduct our Saviour into his fleshly tabernacle, as he did by unmeasurable communications of divine virtue assist his humanity through

all the course of his life; so in this juncture he did inspire him with charity more than human, and did support him to undergo those pressures with invincible patience; and so did sanctify all this sacerdotal performance, that our Lord, as the apostle doth affirm, *did through the eternal Spirit offer himself without spot to God.*
 DR. BARROW.

It is an error to suppose that we are indebted to one more than another of the divine Persons: for their love is but one and the same love, as their essence or nature is one and the same; and there could not exist such a difference or inequality of kindness to men, unless there was such a difference or inequality in themselves as would not stand with the perfect unity of the Godhead.

The love of the three Persons formed the covenant of grace from everlasting, in which they were equally and undividedly concerned; and though the fulfilment of this covenant had necessarily an order and distinction, according to the several engagements of the three distinct Persons, yet the mind and will of the Godhead were but one, and the object of their power but one, even Jehovah's glory in the salvation of sinners.

The Father loved, and concurred in the redemption of his chosen by Christ; the Son loved, and bare their sins in their nature, glorifying in that nature all the attributes of the Godhead; the Spirit loved, and engaged to make effectual the whole plan, by fitting the heart to receive, and by carrying to the heart the benefits of eternal salvation. Thus God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; Christ fulfilled all that was given to him to do; the Spirit enlivens, enlightens, and seals to the day of redemption. This is the order of the covenant; beginning with the Father, and, through the Son and Spirit, descending from heaven to the salvation of his people; but, in the order of their enjoyment of this covenant, the Spirit begins with them, and they ascend by him, next to the Son, and then to the Father. This is a blessed mystery of faith, which (however plain in the Scriptures) can only be understood truly in the course of a gracious experience. No mere notions, and especially of the carnal mind, can possibly reach it. The tuition, or rather intuition, is altogether divine.

What a blessed thing it is to believe and to know assuredly, that the wisdom, will, affection, and power, of all the persons in Jehovah are concerned in the salvation of every poor sinner that repenteth! What a confidence of spirit ought not this to inspire in the children of God! If the Lord be thus engaged and concerned in their welfare, how can any of them be lost, or fail of what he hath prepared for them? O my soul, rejoice in the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, that one God, who hath done such great things for thee, and who will yet do more, yea, more than eye hath seen, ear heard, or entered into the heart of man to conceive. To this One God be Glory. Amen. Hallelujah.

AMB. SERLE.

Consolation of the Doctrine of Three Persons in Jehovah.

THIS fundamental of our religion may be a ground of great encouragement to discouraged souls. It is ordinary, that the apprehensions of Christians take up Jesus Christ as very lovely, and more loving than any of the persons of the Godhead, either the Father or the Holy Ghost. There are some thoughts of estrangedness and distance of the Father, as if the Son did really reconcile and gain him to love us who before hated us; and upon this mistake the soul is filled with continual jealousies and suspicions of the love of God. But observe, I beseech you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all of them first agreeing in one testimony. The Father declares from heaven, that he is abundantly well pleased with his Son, not only because he is his Son, but even in the undertaking and performing of that work of Redemption of sinners. It is therefore his most serious invitation, and peremptory command to all, to hear him, and believe in him, Matt. iii. 17. 1 John iii. 23. Nay, if we speak more properly, our salvation is not the business of Christ alone, as we imagine it, but the whole Godhead is interested in it deeply, and so deeply, that you cannot say, who loves it most, or likes it most. The Father is the very Fountain of it, his love is the spring of all. *God so loved the world, that he hath sent his Son.* Christ hath not purchased that eternal love to us, but is rather the gift, the free gift of eternal love. And therefore, as we have the Son de-

lighting among the sons of men, Prov. viii. and delighting to be employed and to do his will, Psal. xl.; so we have the Father, delighting to send his son, and taking pleasure in instructing him, and furnishing him for it, Isa. xlii. 1. And therefore Christ often professed that he was not about his own work, but the Father's work who sent him, and that it was not his own will, but his Father's he was fulfilling. Therefore we should not look upon the head-spring of our salvation in the Son, but rather ascend up to the Father, whose love and wisdom did frame all this. And thus we may be confident to come to the Father in the Son, knowing that it was the love of the Father that sent the Son, though indeed we must come to him only in the Son in the name of Christ, and faith of acceptance through a Mediator, not because the Mediator purchaseth his good will but because his love and good-will only vents in his beloved Son Christ, and therefore he will not be known nor worshipped but in him, in whom he is near sinners, and reconciling the world to himself. And then the Holy Ghost concurs in this testimony; and as the Son had the work of purchasing rights and interests to grace and glory, so the great work of applying all these privileges to saints, and making them actually partakers of the blessings of Christ his death, is committed in a special way to the Holy Ghost, *I will send the Comforter*, &c. So then Father, Son, and Holy Ghost all agree in one, that Jesus Christ is a sure refuge for sinners, a plank for shipwrecked men, a firm and sure foundation to build everlasting hopes upon. There is no party dissenting in all the Gospel. The business of the salvation of lost souls is concluded in this holy council of the Trinity with one voice. As at first all of them agreed to make man, *Let us make man*: so again, they agree to make him again, to restore him to life in the second Adam. Whoever thou be that wouldst flee to God for mercy, do it in confidence. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are ready to welcome thee, all of one mind to shut out none, to cast out none. But to speak properly, it is but one love; one will, one council, and purpose in the Father, Son, and Spirit, for these Three are One, and not only agree in one, they are one, and what one loves or purposes, all love and purpose.

PROF. BINNING.

Each Person in the Trinity the Object of our Prayers.

IF we consider the persons of the glorious Trinity, so they are all adorable with this act of divine worship. None will deny but that we may direct our prayers unto God the Father; and that God the Son may be distinctly prayed unto, we have an uncontrollable instance in that of St. Stephen: *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*, Acts vii. 59. Yea, and this adoration is due not only to the Divine nature of Christ, which was from all eternity the same in being, in majesty and glory, with the Father; but it is also due unto Christ as Mediator, as God-Man, and so his human nature is also joined in the participation of this high honor, through its union to the Divine nature: the very angels in heaven are commanded to adore him as God-Man, as Mediator, *When he bringeth in his first begotten into the world*, Heb. i. 6. that is, when he brought him into the world as man, he saith, *and let all the angels of God worship him*. Indeed we no where in Scripture, as I remember, have express mention made of any prayer directed to the Holy Ghost; yet whosoever allows him to be God, cannot deny him this worship of prayer: if we must believe in him, we may then certainly call upon him, as the apostle argues, Rom. x. 14.; yea, we have an instance of the seraphims giving praise unto him, which is one part of prayer, *They cried to one another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts*, Isa. vi. 3. This God is the same who in verses 10, 11. bids the prophet say to the people, *Hear ye indeed but understand not, make the heart of this people fat, make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they hear with their ears and see with their eyes*. This is that God whom the seraphims adored, and this is that God that spake to the prophet; and the apostle quoting this very place out of Isaiah, tells us, Acts xxviii. 25. that it was the Holy Ghost spake; so that by comparing these two places together, you see plainly that the Holy Ghost is God, and that he is to be adored by us with the same worship that we worship the Father, and the Son, for the Holy Ghost is the *Lord God of Hosts*; which St. Paul refers to the Holy Ghost: *Well spake the Holy Ghost concerning them*. Thus if we consider God Personally, each person in the Trinity may well be the object of our prayers.

Consider God *essentially*, and so we are also to direct our prayers to him. Now to consider God *essentially*, is to have the eye of our faith fixed upon his attributes, not upon his person; to consider him when we pray to him, not as Father, Son or Holy Ghost, but only as an infinitely glorious, wise, powerful, gracious God, and the like; to look upon him as a most pure essence whose presence is every where, whose presence and goodness is over all things; to conceive him to be an infinite Being altogether unconceivable, this is to consider God *essentially*. Now this notion of God is equally common to all the three Persons, and therefore this is the most fit and congruous way when we come to God in prayer to represent before us his attributes. We need not select out any one Person in the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, to direct our prayers unto, unless it be in some cases wherein their particular offices are more immediately concerned; but when we pray to him who is Almighty, who is All-wise, infinitely Holy, infinitely Just and Merciful, we pray at once to the whole Trinity, both to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So when we pray according to that holy form that Christ hath taught us, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, Father there denotes not only God the Father, the first Person in the Trinity, but it is a relative attribute belonging equally to all the Persons in the Trinity. God is the Father of all men by creation and providence, and he is especially the Father of the faithful by regeneration and adoption. Why now as these actions of creation, regeneration, and adoption are common to the whole Trinity, so also is the title of Father common to the whole Trinity: God the first Person is indeed eminently called the Father; but that is not in respect of us, but in respect of Christ his only-begotten Son from all eternity; in respect of us the whole Trinity is *our Father which art in Heaven*; and when we pray so, we pray both to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost—to all the three Persons.

BP. HOPKINS.

The Son and the Holy Spirit both Advocates.

THERE are two sorts of advocates; the one plead before the judges, and endeavor to convince them by the strength of their

arguments; the other are consulting advocates, who instruct their clients, advise them, resolve their doubts, inform them in difficult points, and conduct their affairs. Jesus is properly a Comforter, an Advocate of the first order. He is our pleading Advocate before the Sovereign Judge, who, bringing forward the invincible arguments of his Passion, pleads with the powerful voice of his blood, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, and obtains for us absolution and grace. But the Holy Ghost is our chamber-counsellor, who advises, instructs, and comforts us, gives us courage to address ourselves unto God, confidence and boldness to speak to him, and the necessary dispositions to prevail with him to hear us. Oh, how happy are we, in having two such Advocates! one of whom pleads for us in heaven, and the other teaches us to form our requests on earth.

Du Bosc.

The intercession of the Spirit is not to be understood of his acting the part of a Mediator between God and man on our account, before the throne of the Majesty on high, but of his relieving our infirmities, as the Illuminator and Comforter of the faithful, in our religious addresses and duties. Christ is the only Mediator and Advocate with the Father; the Spirit is our Sanctifier and the assister of our weaknesses here. The office of Christ is im-

mediately before the throne of God, the agency of the Spirit is more directly with the Church. The intercession of Christ is without us, that of the Holy Ghost is within us. The intercession of Christ is meritorious, the intercession of the Spirit is gracious and supporting. Christ intercedes, and the Spirit is given; the Holy Ghost intercedes, and we implore the benefits of the Saviour's death. By the intercession of Christ all the obstacles to our salvation are removed, as they respect our offended God; by the intercession of the Spirit all the difficulties are taken away which arise from our own frail and corrupt hearts. Christ pleads above, the Spirit pleads below. By the one we are taught to pray, by the other our prayers are accepted. Accordingly the Holy Ghost was of old promised as a *Spirit of grace and of supplications*: and *because we are sons*, God is said to have *sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying*, (or as it is in Rom. viii. *whereby we cry*,) *Abba, Father*, Gal. iv. 6. This last expression will precisely explain the term Intercession before us: for, as by the blessed Spirit crying in our hearts, *Abba, Father*, is obviously meant his enabling us so to cry; in like manner his making intercession for us, is designed to describe his enabling us to intercede and pray for ourselves.

REV. D. WILSON.

SECTION VI.—ON MAN.

Contrast between the Original and Fallen State of Man.

1. *How illustrious a being was man, as he came from the hands of his Maker.*

With what dignified attributes was he endued! For what high pursuits was he qualified! To what sublime enjoyments was he destined! In him was found, in an important sense, the *end* of this earthly system. Without man, the world, its furniture, and its inhabitants, would have existed in vain. Whatever skill, power, and goodness were displayed by the creating hand; there was, before the formation of man, none to understand, admire, love, enjoy, or praise the Creator. The earth was clothed with beauty, the landscape unfolded its delightful scenes, the sky spread its magnificent curtains, the sun

travelled in the greatness of his strength, the moon and stars solemnly displayed the glorious wisdom of their Author, without an eye to gaze, or an heart to contemplate. A magnificent habitation was indeed built and furnished, but no tenant was found. Brutes were the only beings which could enjoy at all, and their enjoyment was limited to animal gratification.

But man was separated from all earthly creatures, by being formed an intelligent being. His mind could trace the skill and glory of the Creator in the works of his hands; and from the nature of the work, could understand, admire and adore the Workman. His thoughts could rise to God, and wander through eternity. The universe was to him a mirror, by which he saw reflected every moment, in every place, and in every form, the beauty,

greatness, and excellence of Jehovah. To Him, his affections and his praises rose, more sweet than the incense of the morning; and made no unhappy harmony with the loftier music of heaven. He was the priest of this great world; and offered the morning and evening sacrifice of thanksgiving for the whole earthly creation. Of this creation he was also the lord; not the tyrant, but the rightful, just, benevolent sovereign. The subjection of the inferior creatures to him was voluntary; and productive of nothing but order, peace, and happiness. With these endowments and privileges, he was placed in paradise, no unhappy resemblance of heaven itself; and surrounded by every thing which was 'good for food, or pleasant to the eye,' or fragrant to the smell. In an atmosphere, impregnated with life; amid streams, in which life flowed; amid fruits, in which life bloomed and ripened; encircled by ever-living beauty and magnificence, peaceful within, safe without, and conscious of immortality; he was destined to labour, only that he might be useful and happy, and to contemplate the wonders of the universe, and worship its glorious Author, as his prime and professional employment. He was an image of the invisible God; created to be like him in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, his most illustrious attributes; and, like him, to exercise dominion over the works of his hands. In this situation also, removed far from death and disease, from sorrow and fear, he was formed for endless improvement. His mind, like that of angels, was capable of continual expansion, refinement and elevation; and his life, of perpetual exaltation in worth, usefulness and honor. God was his visitor, angels were his companions. To complete this system of delight, he was created to be the parent of countless millions, who, like himself, were all to be sinless. They were also to inhabit the same world of peace, life, and happiness; to possess the same immortality, and to share in the same endless enjoyment. At the head of this lower creation, he was to stand and survey this great globe, filled with his own offspring; and to see the whole immense family, like himself, children of God, and heirs of his everlasting love.

2. How greatly has man fallen from his original state.

What proofs of humiliation are visi-

ble in every thing, found in the present world.

In our bodies, particularly, what seeds of weakness, distress, and decay. The first proofs that we possess life are the cries of pain and suffering, inarticulately uttered by the infant, just entered into the world. How often does even that infant agonise and expire in the cradle. If he passes into childhood, how many pains does he undergo; how many fears, how many sorrows. How frequently is he carried, while a child, to the grave. Should he arrive at youth, what a train of new evils is he obliged to encounter. And in how many instances does the canker-worm or the frost nip the blossom, and wither it beneath the fond eye of parental love. Should he become a man, sickness, pain, and sorrow still hunt him through every course of life, and not unfrequently infix their fangs in his heart-strings; while death, always watching for his prey, descends when he is least aware, and seizes, and bears away the miserable victim. Should he live to old age, his strength declines, his face is furrowed with wrinkles, and his head whitened with hoary locks. His body bends towards the earth, from which it was taken; and exhausted by suffering, he resigns his breath; and is conveyed to the dark and narrow house, devoured by worms, dissolved by corruption, and changed into his original dust.

His mind, in the mean time, the sport of evil, ungovernable passions, is ignorant, wild, wayward; the seat of a thousand errors, weaknesses, and follies. With its follies, its sins keep at least an equal pace. Selfishness in many forms, all of them odious, distresses the parental eye even in infancy. In childhood, in youth, in manhood, it is seen in new varieties of operation, and new appearances of deformity. Pride and ambition, avarice and sensuality, pollute and debase the man in early stages of life; and all increase their savage, brutal controul, as he advances in his progress. At the same time envy, fraud, deceit, violence, and cruelty, mould him into a monster; and scarcely permit us to believe, that he was once formed in the image of God. Where is now the mild, benevolent, equitable dominion, exercised by our great Progenitor over his happy empire? Where the peace between man and the inferior

inhabitants of the earth? The chief traces of his footsteps through the animal world are oppression, blood, and death.

In the moral world, what scenes of pollution, fraud and tyranny, of war and ravage, are every where displayed. What groans of anguish have been heard from one end of heaven to the other, and from the apostasy to the present hour.

In the natural world, what a host of enemies to man are arrayed by famine and disease, the storm, the earthquake, and the volcano. Even his breath, his food, his pleasure, are all means of his destruction.

Where is his purity, justice, truth, and good-will? Where his piety, his morning praise, his evening incense? Where his converse with God, his familiarity with angels? Men are now the family of Adam; but how different a family from that which has been described. Were the great ancestor of mankind to rise from the dead, and cast his eyes over this earth; what a race of children would he behold. Accompany him in your imagination to the retreats of drunkenness, gluttony, and pollution. Could he believe that the wretches, burrowed in these foul recesses, sprang from him, who once offered up the worship of paradise? Enter with him into a hall of justice, and see him ponder in silent amazement the terrible exhibitions of fraud and falsehood, private injustice and personal cruelty. Behold him mark with a failing eye the lowering gloom of the gibbet, the horrid recesses of the gaol, and the felon crimes which they were destined to reward. Follow him to the throne of tyranny, and see his bosom heave with emotions unutterable, while he watches the devastation of human happiness and human hope, accomplished by the iron hand of power; man, blasted and withered by its touch, and the fiend himself rioting on sorrow, tears, and death. Finally, adventure with him to the field of battle; and see him tremble and faint at the shouts and groans, at the sight of immeasurable fury, carnage, and woe. How would his heart rend asunder with agony; how would his eyes weep blood, at such a view of this miserable world. At the remembrance, that both the authors and the subjects of these sufferings were his own offspring. Where would he now find his Eden, his virtue, his immortality?

DR. DWIGHT.

● *God made Man upright.*

GOD made man upright.—When the progenitors of our race came from the forming hand of their Creator, they were the subjects of perfect intellectual and moral rectitude. There was no distortion in the understanding, no obliquity in the will, no corruption in the affections. There was perfect truth in the mind, perfect purity in the heart, and perfect practical holiness in the life. They were made *in the image, and after the likeness* of God himself; which, according to the apostle, consisted especially in *righteousness and true holiness*, connected with, and arising out of, *knowledge*.—Otherwise than thus, man could not be made by a pure, and holy, and benevolent Being. To suppose the contrary, is to make God, in the strictest sense, in a sense of which it is impious to admit the imagination, the Author of sin. The subject, indeed, is enveloped in difficulties, of which that man has not properly thought who does not feel their magnitude. Into the discussion of these, it were unseasonable to enter. I can only remark in general, that the matter of fact, of the actual existence of moral evil, is too notorious to admit of a moment's question:—that the Bible account of its origin did not cause it; it existed independently of the revelation which informs us how it began; and the rejection of that revelation neither removes nor mitigates it, nor disencumbers it, in the slightest degree, of its embarrassing difficulties:—that, on the contrary, revelation alone, whilst it assumes and proceeds upon the mournful fact, provides a remedy: all other systems, finding human nature in ruins, leave it as they find it; Revelation rears out of the ruins a magnificent and holy Temple to the God of purity and love. That evil exists, then, is an indisputable fact:—that God could not be its Author, is a proposition, which, to all who entertain right notions of his character, will be equally indisputable:—*God made man upright*. Of all that followed, although happening *according to his determinate counsel and foreknowledge*, the guilt and responsibility must necessarily lie with man himself. This is the statement here; and it is a statement to the truth of which we must assent, in despite of any puzzling questions to which the subject has given rise:—*God made man upright, but they—that*

is, men—*have sought out many inventions.*

DR. WARDLAW.

Wherein the Image of God, in which Man was created, consisted.

BUT we come again to man; of whom it hath been said, that he was created in the image of God. Moses do h not explain, in what that image and likeness of God consisted. But would we clearly discover, what man was possessed of before the Fall, and unto what, by the grace of Jesus Christ, he is to be restored; we must turn our eyes to Jesus Christ; not properly in that character of the Lamb of God, who made himself an offering to God for us, but only in that point of view, as he was a Man. As a man he was in the closest communion with his Father; and the Holy Ghost dwelt in him. The law of God was in his heart; that is, he was full of the love of God and of men. He was filled with wisdom, and was in favor with God and men; that is, he was well-pleasing to God, and esteemed by men. He gladly did the will of his Father, and it was his meat; that is, he lived in it, and hungered to do the will of his Father. He had no self-complacency, nor did he seek his own glory; for he was lowly in heart. He was also meek of heart; when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to the Father. Nevertheless he was zealous for his Father's honor, and was provoked to wrath by men, because of the hardness of their hearts. Otherwise he was compassionate; he was deeply affected when he saw the misery of poor men. Whoever stood in need of his assistance, him he gladly assisted, without examining whether he was worthy of it or not. Amidst the temptations of Satan, he stood firm and unshaken; keeping to the word and commandments of God. He looked to his Father for every thing, and often spent whole nights in prayer. He sought not after good days, nor did he seek the pleasures of this world. He was always and entirely satisfied with the circumstances wherein he found himself, according to the will of his Father. He bore the greatest trials with patience, and with perfect resignation to the will of his Father. His conversation was holy; and he was able boldly to stand before his enemies, and to say, Which of you can convince me of sin, or with justice accuse me?

He confessed the truth, even in such circumstances when he knew it would cost him his life. Having no sin, he would not have died, had he not given himself up to death for us.

What hath been here said concerning the man Jesus Christ is not conjecture, but every circumstance of it is clear and plain from the Holy Scripture. Now, as Christ is expressly called the *Image of God*, Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 15. 2 Cor. iv. 4. it is from thence evident, that this was the condition of Adam before the fall, when he was like unto God, and bore his image; and that thus we shall also be, as soon as we are reinstated into the Image of God.

No sooner doth a poor man, by faith in Christ, become a child of God and a new creature, but the image of God begins to take place in him. And, if he grows in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, that is applicable to him which Paul describes.

We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

If we add the words of Paul;

Put on the New Man, which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of Him that created him, Col. iii. 10.

Also the words,

Put on that New Man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24.

Then may we comprise what hath been said in a few words, and confidently assert, That the Image of God, or likeness to God, consists in the knowledge of the truth, and in righteousness and true holiness.

MORAVIAN CONFESSION.

The Greatness and Meanness of Man.

MAN is at a loss where to fix himself. He is unquestionably out of his way, and feels within himself the remains of a happy state which he cannot retrieve. He searches in every direction, with solicitude, but without success, encompassed with impenetrable darkness!

Hence arose the contest amongst the philosophers: some of whom endeavored to exalt man, by displaying his greatness; others to abase him, by representing his misery. And what seems more strange, is, that each party borrowed the arguments of the other, to establish their own opi-

nion. For the misery of man may be inferred from his greatness, and his greatness from his misery. Thus the one sect demonstrated his misery the more satisfactorily, in that they inferred it from his greatness; and the other the more clearly proved his greatness, because they deduced it from his misery. Whatever was offered by the one, to establish his greatness, served only to evince his misery, as alleged by the other; it being more miserable to have fallen from the greater height. And the converse is equally true. So that in this endless circle of dispute, each helped to advance his adversary's cause; for it is certain that the more men are enlightened, the more they will discover of human misery and human greatness. In a word, man knows himself to be miserable. He is, therefore miserable, because he knows himself to be so. But he is also eminently great, because he knows himself to be miserable.

What a chimera then is man! What a novelty! What a chaos! What a subject of contradiction! A judge of all things, and yet a worm of the earth; the depository of the truth, and yet a medley of uncertainties; the glory and the scandal of the universe. If he exalt himself, I humble him; if he humble himself, I exalt him; and press him with his own inconsistencies, till he comprehends himself to be an incomprehensible monster. PASCAL.

Now all the apparent contradictions are accounted for. For what is so great as man; and yet what so little—what so great, if you mark the occasional traces of his original grandeur—what so little if you follow the prevalent course of his desires and conduct!

What so great as man! How exalted the dignity of his nature above the inferior animals! What a gift is reason! What a distinction, speech! What a thirst he has for knowledge—what a desire after happiness—what a mind, in some faint measure, representing the Deity! Whither cannot his powers extend themselves! What discoveries of science, what invention in the arts! What a thirst after something which is not found beneath the sun, after a good which has no limit! What enlargement, what constant improvement the soul is capable of! In spite of all his misery, he has a feeling, a sentiment which elevates him, and which

he cannot repress. Nothing satisfies his ambition but the esteem of rational and intellectual beings. He burns with the love of glory; he has an idea of a lost happiness which he seeks in every thing in vain. He is a dethroned monarch, wandering through a strange country, but who cannot lay aside his original habits of thought and expectation.*

And yet what so little as man! what contradictions is this strange creature daily and hourly exhibiting! As to his ends and capacities, he is great; as to his habits, he is abject and vile. His reason is expansive, comprehensive, elevated; and yet his passions mean and uncertain and perverse. His mind vast and noble; his desires impure and corrupted; his dissatisfaction with external things separating him from the earth, and yet his propensities chaining him down to it. His thoughts full of grandeur, but his affections narrow and grovelling. In his aspirations, he rises up to angels; in his vices, he sinks below the brutes. In his conceptions of futurity, immensity, eternity, he is sublime; in his follies, pursuits, and desires, he is limited, degraded, childish. Thus, man is a maze and labyrinth to himself, full of grandeur, and full of meanness—of grandeur as to his original dignity, as to the image of God, his capacity for religion, his longing for immortality, his thirst of truth, his large designs and projects—and yet low and debased as to his passions, his changeableness, his pursuit of any folly or error, his degrading pleasures and appetites, his delight in sensual things, and neglect of his intellectual and moral nature.

Hence the history of mankind has ever presented the appalling picture of misery, folly, vice, ignorance triumphant, (except as Revelation has supplied a remedy,) notwithstanding all man's powers and desires. He will not part with religion, and yet lives a slave to appetite; he will not forsake the pursuit of truth, and yet he loves a lie. And whilst apparently advancing towards perfection, he seems also to be sinking into lower depths of debasement. REV. D. WILSON.

Traces of the Divine Image still observable in Man.

THAT God hath withdrawn himself, and left this his temple desolate, we have

* Pascal.

many sad and plain proofs before us. The stately ruins are visible to every eye, that bear in their front (yet extant) this doleful inscription — ‘Here God once dwelt.’ Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man, to show the divine presence did sometime reside in it; more than enough of vicious deformity, to proclaim he is now retired and gone. The lamps are extinct, the altar overturned; the light and love are now vanished, which did the one shine with so heavenly brightness, the other burn with so pious fervor; the golden candlestick is displaced, and thrown away as a useless thing, to make room for the throne of the prince of darkness; the sacred incense, which sent rolling up in clouds its rich perfumes, is exchanged for a poisonous, hellish vapor, and here is, *instead of a sweet savour, a stench*. The comely order of this house is turned all into confusion; *the beauties of holiness* into noisome impurities; *the house of prayer* into *a den of thieves*, and that of the worst and most horrid kind; for every lust is a thief, and every theft sacrilege: continual rapine and robbery are committed upon holy things. The noble powers which were designed and dedicated to divine contemplation and delight, are alienated to the service of the most despicable idols, and employed unto vilest intuitions and embraces; to behold and admire lying vanities, to indulge and cherish lust and wickedness. What! have not the enemies done wickedly in the sanctuary? How have they broken down the carved work thereof, and that too with axes and hammers. Look upon the fragments of that curious sculpture which once adorned the palace of that great king; the relics of common notions; the lively prints of some undefaced truth; the fair ideas of things; the yet legible precepts that relate to practice. Behold! with what accuracy the broken pieces show these to have been engraven by the finger of God, and how they now lie torn and scattered, one in this dark corner, another in that, buried in heaps of dirt and rubbish! There is not now a system, an entire table of coherent truths to be found, or a frame of holiness, but some shivered parcels. And if any, with great toil and labour, apply themselves to draw out here one piece, and there another, and set them together,

they serve rather to show how exquisite the divine workmanship was in the original composition, than for present use to the excellent purposes for which the whole was first designed. Some pieces agree, and own one another; but how soon are our inquiries and endeavours non-plussed and superseded! How many attempts have been made, since that fearful fall and ruin of this fabric, to compose again the truths of so many several kinds into their distinct orders, and make up frames of science, or useful knowledge; and after so many ages, nothing is finished in any one kind! Sometimes truths are misplaced, and what belongs to one kind, is transferred to another, where it will not fitly match: sometimes falsehood inserted, which shatters or disturbs the whole frame. And what is with much fruitless pains done by one hand, is dashed in pieces by another; and it is the work of a following age to sweep away the fine-spun cobwebs of a former. And those truths which are of greatest use, though not most out of sight, are least regarded: their tendency and design are overlooked; or they are so loosened and torn off, that they cannot be wrought in, so as to take hold of the soul, but hover as faint ineffectual notions, that signify nothing. Its very fundamental powers are shaken and disjointed, and their order towards one another confounded and broken: so that what is judged considerable is not considered, what is recommended as eligible and lovely is not loved and chosen. Yea, the truth which is after godliness is not so much disbelieved, as hated, held in unrighteousness; and shines as too feeble a light in that malignant darkness which comprehends it not. You come, amidst all this confusion, as into the ruined palace of some great prince, in which you see here the fragments of a noble pillar, there the shattered pieces of some curious imagery, and all lying neglected and useless among heaps of dirt. He that invites you to take a view of the soul of man, gives you but such another prospect, and doth but say to you, — ‘Behold the desolation;’ all things rude and waste. So that should there be any pretence to the divine presence, it might be said, If God be here, why is it thus? The faded glory, the darkness, the disorder, the impurity, the decayed state in all respects of this temple,

too plainly show the great inhabitant is gone.

REV. JOHN HOWE.

This image—this beautiful image has been long since shivered and disfigured; but its fragments remain to testify that it once existed. There is in the hearts of men a testimony that they shall live for ever; a voice that echoes through futurity; a sense that they shall see strange things in another world; thoughts that wander through eternity, and find no resting place. This is a fragment of God's image, a shattered remnant of his immortality, and it is there to testify against us; for if it had been perfect, nothing would be more delightful than to think that we should live for ever; to look forward into brighter scenes, and rejoice in the glory that should be revealed. All the gold of Arabia would not be worth one hour's excursion of the mind of man into the regions of futurity. For ever and for ever would his mind be reaching forward, and dwelling with fondness upon the thought, that never, from age to age, when time should be no more, should he cease from being. The pleasures of the spirits that walk to and fro in the light of God's countenance, and circle his throne rejoicing, would crowd his fancy and delight his hopes. Visions of celestial happiness would visit him in dreams of the night, and, compared with the dim and distant perspective of eternity, all earthly things would seem 'weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable.' And what is the fact? Let every man judge himself how his natural heart shrinks from the contemplation of a future state of being; how he shudders to look into eternity, as into some dreary and bottomless pit. What a cold and dismal thing does immortality appear; and what a refreshment it is to his spirits to withdraw his thoughts from the consideration, and return to his beloved earth! And then, only observe with what eagerness and desperation he gives up soul and body to the pursuit of things which he knows full well will soon be to him as if they had never been. And yet, this man, if you were to ask him the question, would tell you, that he expected to live for ever; and that when his body was mouldering in the dust from which it was taken, his soul would plunge into an ocean of spirits without bottom and without shore. This he would tell you gravely, as a matter of course.

And then only observe him for one week or for one day, or for this day, which has been sanctified to immortal purposes, and you will find his cares, his hopes, his fears, his wishes, his affections, busied and bustling about this little span of earth, and this little measure of time which he occupies: and death finds this immortal being making playthings of sand, and carries him away from them all, into a land where they shall all be forgotten. This is a strange and astonishing contradiction,—the only thing that looks like a blunder through all the works of nature. Every thing else seems to know its appointed time and its appointed place:—the sun knows his place in the heavens, he does his duty in the firmament, and brings round the seasons in their order, and the ocean knows the boundaries beyond which it must not dare to pass;—every animal knows the home that kind nature has provided—*the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know; my people doth not consider.* Among all the creatures that surround us, *we* are the only beings that look not to our native home; the only beings that seem to have broken the laws of nature; to have forgotten our owner, and the mansions of our Father's house. This naked expectation of immortality, while we see no beauty in it, that we should desire it—while we are feeding on ashes, and have lost our relish for immortal food—is one of the fragments of God's image; it shows that it once existed, and that it now is broken.

But look again, and observe all the astonishing faculties of man; his reason, his memory, his imagination. Observe only how he can, as it were, take knowledge by violence, how he can lock it up in his memory, and keep it in store for his use; with what quickness and ingenuity he can invent and contrive; with what judgment he can weigh, and deliberate, and decide; how he can extort nature's secrets, how he can penetrate into the distant works of God, and inform when the sun shall be darkened, and when the moon shall refuse to give her light. Consider all these astonishing faculties, worthy of the master-piece of God, and then look at the brutal and abominable passions that blacken and deface his soul; look at this same immortal creature, beautified with all the gifts of the Almighty,

blotting out the very understanding with which he has been glorified, by a drunkenness of which brutes are incapable; nay, sometimes 'glorying in his shame,' and boasting of having thus spoiled the good work of God!' Observe him next, inflamed with lust, and plunged into profligacy and debauchery, and making the eternal soul, that has been armed with such glorious faculties, the servant and slave of his perishable body. Observe him rioting in hatred, malignity, and revenge, and admitting the dark passions of an evil spirit into the soul that the Almighty had made to be an habitation for himself.

Measure now this creature with himself; the wonderful powers of his mind, the grasp of his memory, the lightning of his invention, with the depravity of which the beast of the field is incapable; the impurity that brings his soul into bondage to his body, the malice and revenge that make him an abode of the spirit of darkness. Truly 'the wild beasts are in our ruins, and the dragons are in our pleasant places.' These are fragments of an image that was beautiful; enough to show that it once existed, and that now it is broken. And amongst these ruins there is a voice sometimes heard, like the spirit of a departed inhabitant, unwilling to leave even the ruins of the palace which he once had occupied; a voice that *reasons of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*; that sometimes catches the ear in the momentary stilness of the day, and still more in the dead of the night, before deep sleep falleth upon men; but, like the murmur of a ghost, men cannot bear to listen to it, but hurry out of its reach. And thus does conscience sometimes remind us of former days, of hours of sin, of time squandered away that can never be recovered, of an impure heart, of a worldly and carnal mind, and proves that it is a remnant of God; for it tells us *that for all these things God will bring us into judgment*.

But, alas! it does no more than reproach and condemn; for, alas! it cannot change an old heart; it cannot *create a new spirit within us*; it cannot raise our affections from the dust upon which we are treading; it cannot fill us with heavenly dispositions; it cannot make us look forward with delight to scenes of future glory. Alas! this is beyond the power of

conscience; it serves to reproach, but cannot restore;—it is but a ghost among the ruins,—but a voice among the tombs, it is a poor remnant of what once was a living image of the Almighty; enough to show that it once existed, and that now it is broken.

But again, observe him gifted with the power of speech, the power of communicating thought for thought, and circulating knowledge, and truth, and love through all his fellow-creatures. Just conceive for one moment what he would be without it; how ignorant, how dreary, how comfortless!—where would then be mutual assistance, mutual advice, the communication of knowledge, the interchange of affection? Observe man, the only created being endowed with this glorious faculty, and then consider the use that he has made of it. Listen to the curses and the blasphemy against the very Being who bestowed it, who gave it, that it might rise before the throne in hallelujahs. Then hear the falsehood, the deceit, the prevarication issuing through the channel where truth should for ever flow; then hear the impure and wanton jest, that circulates poison, and nurses and assists the natural corruption of the heart, when (God knows!) it has enough to corrupt and brutalise it within; then listen to the scandal, the malice, the invective, and the recrimination, upon the tongue to which God gave the eloquence of affection and benevolence, and the music of pity and consolation; then attend to the lips that can be eloquent and voluble on every subject but one,—that can descant on the market and its prices, on the world and its fashions and its politics, nay, on every little impulse of the feelings, and every fine-spun sentiment of the mind: but if the great God intrudes into conversation, his ways or his dispensations, his mercies and his loving-kindnesses, the tide begins to ebb, the glow of society dies away, and the cold and heartless silence betrays that an unwelcome stranger has made his appearance. Truly this is a magnificent fragment of that illustrious image; enough to show that it once existed, and that now it is shivered and broken. REV. C. WOLFE.

The Universal Corruption of Human Nature.

It is not without great cause, that the Scripture of God doth so many times call

all men here in this world by this word, *EARTH: O thou earth, earth, earth,* (saith Jeremiah,) *hear the word of the Lord,* xxii. 29. This our right name, calling, and title, *earth, earth, earth,* pronounced by the prophet, sheweth what we be indeed, by whatsoever other style, title, or dignity, men do call us. Thus he plainly named us, who knoweth best, both what we be, and what we ought of right to be called.

And thus he setteth us forth, speaking by his faithful apostle St. Paul: *All men, Jews and Gentiles, are under sin: there is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: they are all gone out of the way, they are all unprofitable: there is none that doth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used craft and deceit; the poison of serpents is under their lips: their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and wretchedness are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.* Rom. iii. 13-18. And in another place St. Paul writeth thus: *God hath wrapped all nations in unbelief, that he might have mercy on all,* Rom. xi. 32. *The Scripture shutteth up all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ should be given unto them that believe,* Gal. iii. 22.

St. Paul, in many places, painteth us out in our colours, calling us the *children of the wrath of God*, when we be born, Eph. ii. 3: saying, also, that *we cannot think a good thought of ourselves*; much less can we say well or do well of ourselves. And the Wise Man saith, in the book of Proverbs, *the just man falleth seven times a day*, xxiv. 16. The most tried and approved man Job feared all his works. St. John the Baptist, *being sanctified in his mother's womb*, Luke i. 15, and praised before he was born, being called an angel, and great before the Lord, filled even from his birth with the Holy Ghost, the preparer of the way for our Saviour Christ, and commended of our Saviour Christ to be *more than a prophet*, and the greatest that ever was born of a woman, Luke vii. 28, yet he plainly granteth that he had need to be washed of Christ: he worthily extolleth and glorifieth his Lord and Master Christ, and

humbleth himself as unworthy to unbuckle his shoes, and giveth all honor and glory to God, Matt. iii. 11. So doth St. Paul, both oft and evidently, confess himself, what he was of himself; ever giving, as a most faithful servant, all praise to his Master and Saviour. So doth blessed St. John the Evangelist, in the name of himself and of all other holy men, be they never so just, make this open confession: *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: if we acknowledge our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us,* 1 John i. 8-10.

Wherefore the Wise Man, in the book called Ecclesiastes, maketh this true and general confession: *There is not one just man upon the earth, that doth good, and sinneth not*, vii. 20. And David is ashamed of his sin, but not to confess his sin, Psal. li. How oft, how earnestly, and lamentably doth he desire God's great mercy for his great offences, and that God should not enter into judgment with him! Psal. cxliii. 2. And again, how well weigheth this holy man his sins, when he confesseth that they be so many in number, and so hid, and hard to understand, that it is in a manner impossible to know, utter, or number them! Wherefore he, having a true, earnest, and deep contemplation and consideration of his sins, and yet not coming to the bottom of them, he maketh supplication to God *to forgive him his privy, secret, hid sins*; the knowledge of which he cannot attain unto, Psal. xix. 12. He weigheth rightly his sins from the original root and spring-head; perceiving inclinations, provocations, stirrings, stings, buds, branches, dregs, infections, tastes, feelings, and scents of them to continue in him still. Wherefore he saith, Mark, and *Behold, I was conceived in sins*, Psal. li. 5: he saith not sin, but, in the plural number, *sins*, forasmuch as out of one, as a fountain, spring all the rest. . . .

Thus we have heard, how evil we be of ourselves; how of ourselves, and by ourselves, we have no goodness, help, nor salvation: but contrariwise, sin, damnation, and death everlasting: which, if we deeply weigh and consider, we shall the better understand the great mercy of God, and how our salvation cometh only by Christ. For in ourselves, as of ourselves,

we find nothing, (2 Cor. iii. 5.) whereby, we may be delivered from this miserable captivity, into the which we were cast, through the envy of the devil, by breaking of God's commandment in our first parent Adam. We are all *become unclean: but we all are not able to cleanse ourselves, nor to make one another of us clean*, Psal. xlix. 7, 8. We are by nature *the children of God's wrath*, Eph. ii. 3: but we are not able to make ourselves the children and inheritors of God's glory. We are *sheep that run astray*, 1 Pet. ii. 25: but we cannot of our own power come again to the sheepfold: so great is our imperfection and weakness!

In ourselves, therefore, may we not glory, which, of ourselves, are nothing but sinful: neither may we rejoice in any works that we do; all which be so imperfect and impure, that they are not able to stand before the righteous judgment-seat of God: as the holy prophet David saith, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord: for no man that liveth shall be found righteous in thy sight*, Psal. cxlii. 2. To God, therefore, must we flee; or else shall we never find peace, rest, and quietness of conscience in our hearts. For he is *the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation*, 2 Cor. i. 3: he is the Lord with whom is *plenteous redemption*: Psal. cxxx. 7: he is the God which of *his own mercy saveth us*: and setteth out his charity and exceeding love towards us, in that of his own voluntary goodness, when we were perished, he saved us, and provided an everlasting kingdom for us.

And all these heavenly treasures are given us, not for our own deserts, merits, or good deeds, which of ourselves we have none, but of his mere mercy freely. And for whose sake? Truly, for Jesus Christ's sake, that pure and undefiled Lamb of God. He is that dearly beloved Son, for whose sake God is fully pacified, satisfied, and set at one with man. He is *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world*, John i. 29: of whom only it may be truly spoken, that he did *all things well, and in his mouth was found no craft nor subtilty*, 1 Pet. ii. 22. None but he alone may say, *the prince of the world came, and in me he hath nothing*. And he alone may also say, *Which of you shall reprove me of any fault?* John viii. 46. He is the high and everlasting priest, which hath *offered himself once for all* upon the altar of the cross; and *with that*

one oblation hath made perfect for evermore them that are sanctified, Heb. vii. 27. He is the *alone Mediator between God and man*: which paid our ransom to God *with his own blood*, and with that hath he *cleansed us all from sin*, 1 John ii. 1, 2. He is the Physician, which healeth all our diseases. He is that Saviour, which saveth his people *from all their sins*, Matt. i. 21. To be short, he is that flowing and most plenteous fountain, *of whose fulness all we have received*. *For in him alone are all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God hidden*. And in him, and by him, have we from God the Father all good things, pertaining either to the body or to the soul.

HOMILY ON MISERY OF MAN.

Adam, in departing from the prescribed rule, forfeited the ornament of the image of God, in which he was formed, for himself and all his posterity. And whilst he wickedly affected a forbidden equality with God, came most to resemble the devil, and, like that evil spirit, deformed himself by his own crime: than which we can imagine nothing more hideous or base. The soul of the sinner is a horrid monster, mis-shapen, huge and devoid of light; mere darkness, mere confusion, every thing disjointed and out of order there; nothing properly placed; the things we should despise are esteemed, and what we should value most are neglected. Was any to take a clear view of his inward disposition in a faithful mirror, he would certainly, with the utmost horror, fly from himself as from a most terrible spectacle. And indeed, if holiness is the most beautiful ornament of the divine perfections, that thing must needs be the most deformed, which is not only the most unlike, but diametrically opposite to that ornamental beauty. This is that mentioned, Jam. i. 21. *filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness*; to this it is owing, that man is become abominable in the sight of God, who cannot but turn away the radiant eyes of his unspotted holiness, Hab. i. 13.

Moreover, Adam propagated this vile semblance of the devil to his posterity, not excepting those whom grace has sanctified. For he also *begat Seth in his own likeness, after his image*, Gen. v. 3. I do not chiefly apply this to the likeness of the human nature, much less to the likeness of that holiness which God gra-

ciously restored to Adam, as Chrysostom, Lyranus and Clarius contend for. For, 1st. Holiness and righteousness are not the image of any man, but of God. 2dly. Adam is never proposed in Scripture as the pattern or author of holiness, but as the person by whom sin entered into the world, Rom. v. 12. 3dly. The image of holiness, restored in the parent by grace, is never propagated to the son by natural generation. Things natural are propagated, but things supernatural are *alone of God that sheweth mercy*, Rom. ix. 16. But by this likeness of Adam, I understand the vicious corruption of his nature. 1st. Because the image of Adam, after Seth was begotten, is set in opposition to the image of God, after which Adam was created. 2dly. Because the apostle, in like manner, opposes, 1 Cor. xv. 49, the image of the *earthly* Adam, as consisting of sin and pollution, to the image of the *heavenly* Adam, which consists in holiness and glory. 3dly. Because the whole analogy of Scripture evinces, that a *clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean*, and that *what is born out of the flesh is flesh*, Job xiv. 4.—John iii. 6.

This turpitude of sin is by Paul called the *old man*, Eph. iv. 22.—Col. iii. 9. *Man*, because it overspreads the whole man, and defiles both soul and body; in the soul it has possession of the understanding, will, and affections.

It has involved the understanding in horrid darkness, whereby it is grossly ignorant of divine things, Eph. iv. 18. So that the natural or animal man, or he that has no other spirit but his soul, and destitute of the Spirit of God, Judg. v. 29, *receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. And as he discerns no wisdom in divine things worthy of God, so, with intolerable presumption, he represents them under those disagreeable notions which his own foolish and self-conceited wisdom hath devised; and while he attempts to correct the wisdom of God, which he cannot understand, he transfigures it, as much as he can, to downright folly; and this is that which is said, Rom. i. 22, 23. *professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God, &c.*

But the sinner is not only under blindness, but is in love with his blindness.

He glories that he really sees, even when he is most blind, John ix. 40, 41. And when, to the utmost of his power, he resists the true light, though discovering itself in a most pleasing manner, by the works of Divine Providence, by the word of God, and by some sparkling rays of the Spirit; *he loves darkness rather than light; hateth the light, neither cometh to the light*, John iii. 19, 20. Of such Job witnesseth, *that they are of those that rebel against the light*, Job xxiv. 13. They have an aversion to all light, both that which is natural, which, hinders them from perpetrating their crimes in the sight of the world, and that which is moral, which convinces them of the duty they ought certainly to perform, but which they wickedly neglect. They endeavour to stifle it by disputing both against the word of God and their own conscience. Hence those impious expressions of some, who wish that this or the other truth that opposes their lusts, was not to be found in the word of God. . . .

Nor is the will less corrupt; for, 1st. It is averse to all that is truly good, Job xxi. 14. *Therefore they say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. And when the great things of the law are written to them, they are counted as a strange thing*; as of no very great moment, and what they have no concern with, Hos. viii. 12. And how can it be otherwise? For since by reason of their blindness, they do not discern the excellency of true virtue, but on the contrary find many things in the practice of it which are opposite to their unruly lusts, their mind is averse to it: *they hate the good*, Micah iii. 2.

Secondly, It is driven on to evil with great impetuosity; *They love the evil*, Micah iii. 2, to a degree indeed that not some, but *every imagination of the heart of man*; not at some, but *at all times*; not in some, but in every measure, *is only evil*, Gen. vi. 5. Now this is to be understood, not only of the giants in the first ages, as appears by comparing this place with chap. viii. 21. where almost the same words are used concerning men in future periods of time. *I will not again*, says God, *curse the ground any more, because, or though the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*. Whereby it is intimated, *that evil imagination* is the common blemish of all mankind. To this

also may be referred, what Paul writes, Rom. viii. 7. *the carnal mind, the wisdom of the flesh*, that which it willingly imagines, lusts after as wisdom, or that action, which the carnal mind contrives, *is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

Nay, 3dly. The desire of evil is so great, that it is irritated by that very law of God which forbids, it, and is more impetuously hurried on to things forbidden only because they are prohibited. Without the driving or impelling force of the law, sin lies dormant and lifeless; but when the commandment comes, it revives and is put in motion, and, taking occasion by the commandment, works all manner of concupiscence to a pitch, that every check being hurtful, *by the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful*, Rom. vii. 8, 9, 11, 13. Chrysostom beautifully says, ‘When we lust after any thing, and are afterwards restrained, this only blows up the flame of lust to a higher degree.’ . . .

Nor indeed is the body itself free from the tyrannical dominion of sin: the members are agitated by such an inordinate flow of blood and spirits, that they easily carry away the mind, while it is forgetful of her own dignity. And, indeed, that pleasure which the members have in sin, or which they seek for by sinning, is the cause of most sins, even spiritual sins not excepted, and of their reasoning against the law of God. This perverseness and corruption is by the apostle called *the law in the members*, that power and efficacy of sin dwelling in the body, which had frequently forced it to a criminal compliance, and had *warred against the law of his mind*: that is, against the law of God inscribed on the mind by nature and grace, and in which the mind delights, *and had brought him into captivity*, and having once taken hold of him, does not let him go, Rom. vii. 23. Certainly the members seduce and prove offensive, which Job, being afraid of, *made a covenant with his eyes, that they should not look upon a maid*, Job xxxi. 1. And David prayed, *turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity*, Ps. cxix. 37. And wisdom advises, to *put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite*, Prov. xxiii. 2. All these plainly declare the danger arising to religion from the members.

As therefore this corruption wholly over-spreads all the parts and faculties of man, it is therefore called *man*. But it goes by the name of the *old man*: 1st. Because it sprung up in Paradise itself at the beginning, by the infection of the tempting serpent, and owes its original to that old dragon mentioned, Rev. xii. 9. 2dly. Because it is contemporary with every man in particular, Ps. li. 7. and if not always in order of time, yet of nature, precedes man’s gracious regeneration. 3dly. Because we ought to abolish, reject and abhor it, as a worthless and antiquated thing, which is wore out and disfigured by long use; just as *old things pass away, that all things may become new*, 2 Cor. v. 17. WITSIUS.

Those who have the audacity to attribute to God the cause of their sins, under the pretext that we assert that men are naturally corrupted, would do well to consider the grounds on which they rest, and whether it is not a great crime in them to contemplate the work of God in their corruption, instead of seeking it in the nature which Adam received before his transgression. Let us ever remember, to impute our ruin to the depravation of our nature, and not to nature itself, lest we accuse God, the author and preserver of our being, as though our misery proceeded from him. It is perfectly true, that this mortal evil is deeply rooted in our nature. But it is certain, that this evil hath occurred through sin, superinduced. We ought, therefore, to complain of ourselves alone. This the Scriptures particularly inculcate. *Lo, this only have I found, saith the Preacher, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.* From whence it appears clearly, that it is to man alone that his ruin must be imputed; since, having received by the favor of God a natural uprightness, he hath, by his own folly, fallen into vanity. CALVIN.

This Doctrine proved by our forgetfulness of the world to come.

WHEN it is considered that the doctrine of a life to come is ascertained by the advent of the Messiah, with a degree of evidence so superior to that which attaches to any other futurity, that he who refuses to believe it, on his testimony, would not

be persuaded although one rose from the dead, the propensity to disregard it, however general, is the most astonishing phenomenon in nature. Man is naturally a prospective creature, endowed not only with a capacity of comparing the present with the past, but also of anticipating the future, and dwelling with anxious rumination on scenes which are yet remote. He is capable of carrying his views, of attaching his anxieties, to a period much more distant than that which measures the limits of his present existence; capable, we distinctly perceive, of plunging into the depths of future duration, of identifying himself with the sentiments and opinions of a distant age, and of enjoying by anticipation the fame of which he is aware he shall never be conscious, and the praises he shall never hear. So strongly is he disposed to link his feelings with futurity, that shadows become realities when contemplated as subsisting there; and the phantom of posthumous celebrity, the faint image of his being, impressed on future generations, is often preferred to the whole of his present existence, with all its warm and vivid realities. The complexion of the day that is passing over him, is determined by the anticipations of the morrow: the present borrows its brightness and its gloom from the future, which presenting itself to his contemplation as in a mirror, incessantly agitates him with apparitions of terror or delight. In the calculations of interest, the mind is affected in the same manner; it is perpetuity which stamps its value on whatever we possess, so that the lowest epicure would prefer a small accession to his property, to the most exquisite repast; and none are found so careless of futurity, as not to prefer the inheritance he may bequeath, to one of equal value, the title to which expires with his life.

How is it then that we find it so difficult to prevail upon men to fix their attention firmly on another world, that real future existence which reason assures us is probable, which revelation teaches us is certain, which is separated from us by so narrow a boundary, and into which thousands of our fellow creatures are passing every moment? How is it that the professed followers of Him especially who descended from heaven, who came forth from the Father to conduct us thither, are so indisposed to turn their thoughts and contem-

plations to that unchanging state of being, into which they are so shortly to enter! It is not, we perceive, that to move forward is not congenial with our mental constitution: it is not because we are so enchanted with the present scene, as to be incapable of diverting our attention from it; for we are continually disquieted by a restless desire of something future: it is not because we are seldom warned or reminded of another state of existence; for every funeral bell, every opening grave, every symptom of decay within, and of change without, affords us a separate warning.

Were any other event of far inferior moment, ascertained by evidence, which made but a distant approach to that which attests the certainty of a life to come; had we equal assurance that after a very limited, though uncertain period, we should be called to migrate into a distant land, whence we were never to return, the intelligence would fill every breast with solicitude; it would become the theme of every tongue; and we should avail ourselves with the utmost eagerness of all the means of information respecting the prospects which awaited us in that unknown country. Much of our attention would be occupied in preparing for our departure; we should cease to consider the place we now inhabit as our home, and nothing would be considered as of moment, but as it bore upon our future destination. How strange is it then, that with the certainty we all possess of shortly entering into another world, we avert our eyes as much as possible from the prospect; that we seldom permit it to penetrate us; and that the moment the recollection recurs, we hasten to dismiss it, as an unwelcome intrusion! Is it not surprising that the volume we profess to recognise as the record of immortality, and the sole depository of whatever information it is possible to obtain respecting the portion which awaits us, should be consigned to neglect, and rarely, if ever, consulted with the serious intention of ascertaining our future condition?

That a creature formed for an endless duration should be disposed to turn his attention from that object, and to contract his views and prospects within a circle which, compared to eternity, is but a mathematical point, is truly astonishing; and as it is impossible to account for it from

the natural constitution of the mind, it must originate in some great *moral* cause. It shows that some strange catastrophe has befallen the species; that some deep and radical malady is inherent in the moral system. Though philosophers of a certain description may attempt to explain and justify it on some ingenious hypothesis, yet in spite of metaphysical subtleties, the alarming inquiry will still return—How is it that the disposition of mankind is so much at variance with their prospects? that no train of reflections is more unwelcome than that which is connected with their eternal home? If the change is considered as a happy one; if the final abode to which we are hastening is supposed to be an improvement on the present, why shrink back from it with aversion? If it is contemplated as a state of suffering, it is natural to inquire what it is that has invested it with so dark and sombre a character! What is it which has enveloped that species of futurities in a gloom which pervades no other? If the indisposition to realise a life to come arises in any measure from a vague presentiment that it will bring us, so to speak, into a closer contact with the Deity, by presenting clearer manifestations of his character and perfections, (and who can doubt that this is a principal cause?) the proof it affords of a great deterioration in our moral condition is complete. For who will suppose it possible, a disposition to hide himself from his Creator should be an original part of the constitution of a reasonable creature? or what more portentous and unnatural than for him that is formed, to shun the presence of his Maker, and to place his felicity in the forgetfulness of him *in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being*? If he is pained and disquieted whenever he is forcibly reminded of Him whose power sustains, and whose bounty replenishes the universe with whatever is good and fair; if the source of being and of happiness is the object of terror, instead of confidence and love, it is not easy to conceive what can afford a stronger conviction of guilt, or a more certain presage of danger.

The conclusion to which we are conducted is confirmed by inspiration, which assures us that a great revolution has actually befallen the species; and that in consequence of the entrance of sin into the world, we have incurred the forfeiture

of the divine favor, and the loss of the divine image. REV. R. HALL.

The Heart is the Source of all Evil.

FOR the seat and subject of this law of sin, the Scripture everywhere assigns it to be the heart. There indwelling sin keeps its especial residence. It hath invaded and possessed the throne of God himself; *Madness is in the heart of men while they live*, Eccles. ix. 3. This is their madness, or the root of all that madness which appears in their lives. *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies*, Matt. xv. 19.

There are many outward temptations and provocations that befall men, which excite and stir them up unto these evils; but they do but as it were open the vessel, and let out what is laid up and stored in it. The root, rise, and spring of all these things is in the heart. Temptations and occasions put nothing into a man, but only draw out what was in him before. Hence is that summary description of the whole work and effect of this law of sin, *Every imagination of the thought of man's heart is only evil continually*, Gen. vi. 5. So also, chap. viii. 21. The whole work of the law of sin, from its first rise, its first coining of actual sin, is here described; and its seat, its workhouse, is said to be the heart; and so it is called by our Saviour, *the evil treasure of the heart*, Luke vi. 45. *An evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things*. This treasure is the prevailing principle of moral actions that is in men. So in the beginning of the verse, our Saviour calls grace *the good treasure of the heart* of a good man, whence that which is good doth proceed. It is a principle constantly and abundantly inciting and stirring up unto, and consequently bringing forth, actions conformable and like unto it, of the same kind and nature with itself. And it is also called a treasure for its abundance. It will never be exhausted; it is not wasted by men's spending on it; yea, the more lavish men are of this stock, the more they draw out of this treasure, the more it grows and abounds. As men do not spend their grace, but increase it by its exercise, no more do they their indwelling sin. The more men exercise their grace in duties of obedience, the more it is strengthened and increased;

and the more men exert and put forth the fruits of their lust, the more is that enraged and increased in them; it feeds upon itself, swallows up its own poison, and grows thereby. The more men sin, the more they are inclined unto sin. It is from the deceitfulness of this law of sin, whereof we shall speak afterward at large, that men persuade themselves, that by this or that particular sin, they shall so satisfy their lusts, as that they shall need to sin no more. Every sin increaseth the principle, and fortifieth the habit of sinning. It is an evil treasure that increaseth by doing evil. And where doth this treasure lie? It is in the heart. There it is laid up, there it is kept in safety. All the men in the world, all the angels in heaven, cannot dispossess a man of this treasure; it is so safely stored in the heart.

DR. JOHN OWEN.

The Heart is at enmity against God.

THE carnal mind is enmity against God. Rom. viii. 7. That which is here called, *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός*, 'the wisdom of the flesh,' is the same with the law of sin, which we insist on. And what says he hereof? Why it is *ἐχθρα εἰς Θεόν*, 'enmity against God.' It is not only an enemy, for so possibly some reconciliation of it unto God might be made; but it is *enmity itself*, and so not capable of accepting any terms of peace. Enemies may be reconciled, but enmity cannot. Yea the only way to reconcile enemies, is to destroy the enmity. So the apostle in another case tells us, *We who were enemies, are reconciled unto God*, Rom. v. 10. That is a work compassed and brought about by the blood of Christ, the reconciling of the greatest enemies. But when he comes to speak of enmity, there is no way for it, but it must be abolished and destroyed, *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity*, Eph. ii. 15. There is no way to deal with any enmity whatever, but by its abolition or destruction. . .

It may not be so effectual and powerful in operation, as where it hath more life and vigor, but it is enmity still. As every drop of poison is poison and will infect, and every spark of fire is fire and will burn, so is every thing of the law of sin, the last, the least of it; it is enmity; it will poison, it will burn. . . . Our apostle, who may well be supposed to have made as great a progress in the subduing of it, as any one on the earth, yet after all cries

out for deliverance, as from an irreconcilable enemy, Rom. vii. 24. The meanest acting, the meanest and most imperceptible working of it, is the acting and working of enmity. Mortification abates of its force, but doth not change its nature. Grace changeth the nature of man, but nothing can change the nature of sin. Whatever effect be wrought upon it, there is no effect wrought in it, but that it is enmity still, sin still. . . .

It is not only said to be enmity, but it is said to be *enmity against God*. It hath chosen a great enemy indeed. It is in sundry places proposed as our enemy; *Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*, 1 Pet. ii. 11. They are enemies to the soul, that is, to ourselves. Sometimes as an enemy to the Spirit that is in us; *the flesh lusteth, or fighteth against the Spirit*, Gal. v. 17. It fights against the spirit, or the spiritual principle that is in us, to conquer it; it fights against our souls to destroy them. It hath special ends and designs against our souls, and against the principle of grace that is in us; but its proper, formal object is God; it is *enmity against God*. It is its work to oppose grace; it is a consequent of its work to oppose our souls, which follows upon what it doth, more than what it intends; but its nature and formal design is to oppose God. God, as the lawgiver; God, as holy; God, as the Author of the Gospel, a way of salvation by grace and not by works, is the direct object of the law of sin. Why doth it oppose duty, so that the good we would do, we do not, either as to matter or manner? Why doth it render the soul carnal, indisposed, unbelieving, unspiritual, weary, wandering? It is because of its enmity to God, whom the soul aims to have communion withal in duty. It hath, as it were, that command from Satan, which the Assyrians had from their king, *Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel*, 1 Kings xxii. 31. It is neither great nor small, but God himself, the King of Israel, that sin sets itself against. . .

It is God himself that is aimed at. It is true, the pleasures, the wages of sin, do greatly influence the sensual, carnal affections of men; but it is the holiness and authority of God that sin itself rises up against; it hates the yoke of the Lord. *Thou hast been weary of me*, saith God to sinners, and that during their performance

of abundance of duties. Every act of sin is a fruit of being weary of God. Thus Job tells us what lies at the bottom in the heart of sinners; *They say to the Lord, Depart from us, it is enmity against him and aversion from him.* Here lies the formal nature of every sin—it is an opposition to God, a casting off his yoke, a breaking off the dependence which the creature ought to have on the Creator. And the apostle gives the reason why he affirms *the carnal mind to be enmity against God*, namely, because *it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be*, Rom. viii. 7. It never is, nor will, nor can be subject to God, its whole nature consisting in an opposition to him. The soul wherein it is, may be subject to the law of God, but this law of sin sets up in contrariety unto it, and will not be in subjection. . . .

If there were any thing of God, his nature, properties, his mind or will, his law or Gospel, any duty of obedience to him, of communion with him, that sin had not an enmity against, the soul might have a constant shelter and retreat within itself, by applying itself to that of God, to that of duty towards him, to that of communion with him, that sin would make no opposition against. But the enmity lies against God and all of God, and every thing wherein or whereby we have to do with him. It is not subject to the law, nor any part or parcel, word or tittle of the law. Whatever is opposite to any thing as such, is opposite unto all of it. Sin is enmity to God as God, and therefore to all of God. Not his goodness, not his holiness, not his mercy, not his grace, not his promises, there is not any thing of him, which it doth not make head against, nor any duty, private, public, in the heart, in external works, which it opposeth not. And the nearer, if I may so say, any thing is to God, the greater is its enmity unto it. The more of spirituality and holiness is in any thing, the greater is its enmity. That which hath most of God, hath most of its opposition. Concerning them in whom this law is most predominant, God says, *Ye have set at nought all my counsel, and you would have none of my reproofs*, Prov. i. 25. Not this or that part of God's counsel, his mind or will is opposed, but all his counsel, whatever he calleth for or guideth unto, in every particular of it, all is set at nought, and nothing of his reproof attended unto. A man would think it not

very strange that sin should maintain an enmity against God in his law, which comes to judge it, to condemn it; but it raiseth a greater enmity against him in his Gospel, wherein he tenders mercy and pardon, as a deliverance from it, and that merely because more of the glorious properties of God's nature, more of his excellencies and condescension, is manifested therein, than in the other.

DR. J. OWEN.

Though the more positive workings of this enmity do not (perhaps with the most) so ordinarily discover themselves; and they do not see or suspect that they hate him, while they are not urged to self-reflection; and when they are, hardly admit a conviction that they do: yet the matter carries its own evidence with it, and would soon be put beyond a question, if men were willing to understand the truth of their own case. For whence else do they so slowly entertain the knowledge of God, when the whole earth is full of his glory? When so manifest prints and footsteps of his wisdom, power, and goodness, do offer themselves to view in every creature, whence can it be, but that they like not to retain him in their knowledge? Rom. i. And that their very hearts say to him, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways?* Job xxi. Why is so bright a light not observed, but that it shines amidst a malignant darkness, that, resisting, comprehends it not? Why are the thoughts of God so unpleasant to men, and unfrequent, that when one would suppose no thoughts should be so obvious, none so welcome, yet it is become the character of an unrenewed man to forget God, Psal. ix. or not to have him in all his thoughts? Psal. x. Why do men decline his acquaintance, live voluntary strangers to him all their days, and as without him in the world? Ephes. ii. Why are men so averse to trust him, and turn to him, even upon so mighty assurances? What makes them shy to take his word, but rather count him a liar, though they know it inconsistent with his nature; and can form no notion of God, without including this conception therein, that he cannot lie; when as yet they can ordinarily trust one another, though there be so much colour to say, *All men are liars?* Why do they resist his authority, against which they cannot dispute, and disobey his commands, unto which they

cannot devise to frame an exception? What, but the spirit of enmity, can make them regret so easy a yoke, reject so light a burthen, shun and fly off from so peaceful and pleasant paths; yea, and take ways that so manifestly take hold of hell, and lead down to the chambers of death, rather choosing to perish than obey? Is not this the very height of enmity? What further proof would we seek of a disaffected and implacable heart? Yet to all this, we may cast in that fearful addition, their saying in their heart, No God, Psal. xiv. as if they should say, O that there were none! This is enmity, not only to the highest pitch of wickedness, (to wish their common Parent extinct, the Author of their being,) but even unto madness itself. For in the forgetful heat of this transport, it is not thought on that they wish the most absolute impossibility, and that, if it were possible, they wish, with his, the extinction of their own, and of all being; and that the sense of their hearts, put into words, would amount to no less than a direful and most horrid execration and curse upon God, and the whole creation of God at once! as if by the blasphemy of their poisonous breath they would wither all nature, blast the whole universe of being, and make it fade, languish, and drop into nothing. This is to set their mouth against heaven and earth, themselves, and all things at once, as if they thought their feeble breath should overpower the omnipotent word, shake and shiver the adamantine pillars of heaven and earth, and the almighty *fiat* be defeated by their *nay*; striking at the root of all! So fitly is it said, The *fool* hath in his heart muttered thus! Nor are there few such fools: but this is plainly given us as the common character of apostate man, the whole revolted race; of whom it is said, in very general terms, *They all are gone back, there is none that doeth good*. This is their sense, one and all; that is, comparatively; and the true state of the case being laid before them, it is more their temper and sense to say *no* God, than to repent, and turn to him. What mad enmity is this! Nor can we devise into what else to resolve it.

REV. J. HOWE.

Value of the Immortal Soul.

PERHAPS, were we to inform you, that, in order to save your souls, God had subverted formerly all the laws of nature, or,

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to use the language of a prophet, that he had *shaken the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land*, Hag. ii. 6. Perhaps, were we to tell you, that, in order to save your souls, God deferred the end of the world, and put off the last vicissitudes, that are to put a period to the duration of this universe, that, according to St. Peter, *the Lord is long-suffering to us-ward*, 2 Pet. iii. 9. Perhaps, were we to affirm, that in order to save our souls, he will come one day on the clouds of heaven, sitting on a throne, surrounded with glorious angels, accompanied with myriads of shouting voices, to deliver them with the greater pomp, and to save them with more splendor. Perhaps, by relating all these mighty works done for our souls, we might excite in you ideas of their dignity more lively than that which we have chosen, and to which we intend to confine our attention. But surmount, if you can, your customary indolence, and form an adequate idea of the dignity of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in order the better to judge of the dignity of those souls, of which his blood was the price.

Go, learn it in heaven. Behold the Deity. Approach his throne. Observe the *thousand thousands ministering unto him, ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him*, Dan. vii. 10. See his eyes sparkling with fire, and his majesty and glory filling his sanctuary, and, by the dignity of the victim sacrificed, judge of the value of the sacrifice.

Go, study it in all the economies that preceded this sacrifice. Observe the types, which prefigured it; the shadows, that traced it out; the ceremonies, which depicted it; and, by the pomp of the preparations, judge of the dignity of the substance prepared.

Go, learn it on Mount Calvary. Behold the wrath that fell on the head of Jesus Christ! Behold his blood pouring out upon the earth, and him, your Saviour, drinking the bitter cup of divine displeasure! See his hands and his feet nailed to the cross, and his whole body one great wound; observe the unbridled populace foaming with rage around the cross, and glutting their savage souls with his barbarous sufferings; and, by the horror of the causes, that contributed to his death, judge of the death itself!

Go to the infidel, and let him teach you the dignity of the sacrifice of Christ. Re-

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member, on this account he attacks Christianity, and he hath some shew of reason for doing so: for if this religion may be attack'd on any side, with the least hope of success, it is on this. The truths of the Christian religion are incontestible: but if there be any one article of the Gospel, which requires an entire docility of mind, an absolute submission of heart, a perfect deference to God, who speaks, it is the article of the sacrifice of the cross. Weigh the objections, and by the greatness of the difficulties judge of the dignity of the mystery.

Recollect, Christian! God thought fit to require the blood of his Son for the redemption of our souls. These souls must have been very precious in the sight of God, since he redeemed them at a price so immense. The misery into which they were liable to be plunged, must have been extremely terrible, since God thought proper to make such great efforts to save them from it. The felicity, of which they are capable, and to which the Lord intends to elevate them, must be infinitely valuable, since it cost him so much to bring them to it. For what in the universe is of equal value with the blood of the Son of God? Disappear, all ye other miracles, wrought in favour of our souls! ye astonishing prodigies, that confirmed the Gospel! thou, delay of the consummation of all things! ye great and terrible signs of the second coming of the Son of God! Vanish before the miracle of the cross; for the cross shines you all into darkness and shade. This glorious light makes your glimmering vanish, and after my imagination is filled with the tremendous dignity of this sacrifice, I can see nothing great beside. But, if God hath estimated our souls at such a rate, shall we set a low price on them? If he hath given so much for them, do we imagine we can give too much for them? If, for their redemption, he hath sacrificed the most valuable person in heaven, do we imagine there is any thing upon earth too great to give up for them?

No, no, my brethren! after what we have heard, we ought to believe, that there is no shadow of exaggeration in this exclamation of Jesus Christ, *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* I do not certainly know what our Saviour meant to say, whether he intended to speak of a man,

who should *gain the whole world*, and instantly *lose his soul*; or of one, who should not *lose his soul* till long after he had obtained *the whole world*, and had reigned over it through the course of a long life. But I do know, that the words are true, even in the most extensive sense. Suppose a man, who should not only enjoy universal empire for one whole age, but for a period equal to the duration of the world itself; the proposition that is implied in the words of Jesus Christ is applicable to him. Such a soul as we have described, a soul so excellent in its nature, so extensive in its duration, so precious through its redemption; a soul capable of acquiring so much knowledge, of conceiving so many desires, of experiencing so much remorse, of feeling so many pleasures and pains? a soul that must subsist beyond all time, and perpetuate itself to eternity; a soul redeemed by the blood of the Son of God? a soul so valuable ought to be preferred before all things, and nothing is too precious to be given for its exchange. *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

SAURIN.

WHEN God made a soul, it was only, *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem nostram*. He spake the word, and it was done. But when man had lost this soul which the Spirit of God breathed into him, it was not so soon recovered. It is like the resurrection, which hath troubled the faith of many, who are more apt to believe that God made a man from nothing, than that he can return a man from dust and corruption. But for this resurrection of the soul, for the re-implacing the Divine image, for the rescuing it from the devil's power, for the re-entitling it to the kingdoms of grace and glory, God did a greater work than the creation; he was fain to contract Divinity to a span, to send a person to die for us, who of himself could not die, and was constrained to use rare and mysterious arts to make him capable of dying; he prepared a person instrumental to his purpose, by sending his Son from his own bosom, a Person both God and man, an enigma to all nations and to all sciences; one that ruled over all the angels, that walked upon the pavements of heaven; whose feet were clothed with stars, whose

eyes were brighter than the sun, whose voice is louder than thunder, whose understanding is larger than that infinite space, which we imagine in the uncircumscribed distance beyond the first orb of heaven; a Person to whom felicity was as essential as life to God: this was the only Person that was designed, in the eternal decrees of the Divine predestination, to pay the price of a soul, to ransom us from death; less than this Person could not do it. For although a soul in its essence is finite, yet there were many infinities which were incident and annexed to the condition of lost souls. For all which because provision was to be made, nothing less than an infinite excellence could satisfy for a soul who was lost to infinite and eternal ages, who was to be afflicted with insupportable and undetermined, that is, next to infinite, pains; who was to bear the load of an infinite anger from the provocation of an eternal God. And yet if it be possible that infinite can receive degrees, this is but one half of the abyss, and I think the lesser. For that this Person, who was God eternal, should be lessened in all his appearances to a span, to the little dimensions of a man; and that he should really become very contemptibly little, although at the same time he was infinitely and unalterably great; that is, essential, natural, and necessary felicity, should turn into an intolerable, violent, and immense calamity to his person; that this great God should not be admitted to pay the price of our redemption, unless he would suffer that horrid misery, which that lost soul should suffer; as it represents the glories of his goodness, who used such rare and admirable instruments in actuating the designs of his mercy, so it shows our condition to have been very desperate, and our loss invaluable.

A soul in God's account is valued at the price of the blood, and shame, and tortures of the Son of God; and yet we throw it away for the exchange of sins, that a man naturally is ashamed to own. I need not say we lose our soul to save our lives; for, though that was our blessed Saviour's instance of the great unreasonableness of men, who by 'saving their lives lose them,' that is, in the great account of doomsday; though this, I say, be extremely unreasonable, yet there is something to be pretended in the bargain; nothing to excuse

him with God, but something in the accounts of timorous men; but, to lose our souls with swearing, that unprofitable, dishonorable, and unpleasant vice; to lose our souls with disobedience or rebellion, a vice that brings a curse and danger all the way in this life; to lose our souls with drunkenness, a vice which is painful and sickly in the very acting it, which hastens our damnation by shortening our lives; are instances fit to be put in the stories of fools and madmen. And all this vice is a degree of the same unreasonableness; the most splendid temptation being nothing but a pretty well-weaved fallacy, a mere trick, a sophism, and a cheating and abusing the understanding. But that which I consider here is, that it is an affront and contradiction to the wisdom of God, that we should so slight and undervalue a soul, in which our interest is so concerned; a soul which he who made it, and who delighted not to see it lost, did account a fit purchase to be made by the exchange of his Son, the eternal Son of God. To which also I add this additional account, that a soul is so greatly valued by God, that we are not to venture the loss of it to save all the world. For, therefore, whosoever should commit a sin to save kingdoms from perishing; or, if the case should be put, that all the good men, and good causes, and good things in this world, were to be destroyed by tyranny, and it were in our power by perjury to save all these; that doing this sin would be so far from hallowing the crime, that it were to offer to God a sacrifice of what he most hates, and to serve him with swine's blood; and the rescuing all these from a tyrant, or a hangman, could not be pleasing to God upon these terms, because a soul is lost by it; which is, in itself, a greater loss and misery than all the evils in the world put together can outbalance; and a loss of that thing for which Christ gave his blood a price. Persecutions, and temporal death in holy men, and in a just cause, are but seeming evils, and therefore not to be bought off with the loss of a soul, which is a real, and an intolerable calamity. And if God, for his own sake, would not have all the world saved by sin, that is, by the hazarding of a soul, we should do well for our own sakes not to lose a soul for trifles, for things that make us here to be miserable, and even here also to be ashamed.

BR. TAYLOR.

What an astonishing being is the human soul ! it is a being, i. e. a single uncompounded substance, a perfect one, an entire monad, or a one undivided living existence ! a spirit, a self-active, rational being, endued with understanding, will, and affections : a creature that can reason concerning God and itself, and is able to survey its own being and ideas ; and, what is more wonderful, it is able to survey God's being and ideas ; and to compare the idea of the nature of God, and the idea of our own nature together, and to draw inferences from God and ourselves, and to understand the agreement or disagreement between God and ourselves. What an astonishing creature is this, that can survey the ideas of God, angels, men, and devils, in ten thousand modes of perception ! a creature that is in a state of thought, or consciousness, incessant, unavoidable, unsuppressible, and inextinguishable : a creature that is in a state of volition and unavoidable motion, in a state of incessant and unavoidable capacity of receiving ideas, new ideas, from heaven, earth, and hell, all through life, and to eternity !

What a grand idea of the soul is this ! it cannot cease from thought by its own choice or power, or by the choice and power of any creature. This soul is an image of the spirituality, eternity, omnipresence, immutability, life, omnipotence, and omniscience of God. There is no other creature like God, but the soul, in all this vast universe. It is a spirit, and therefore like God the supreme Spirit---it is eternal in its duration and desires, and therefore an image of the eternity of God---it flies through infinite space in a moment of time, and in this view it is an image of the omnipresence of God --it is quite unchangeable in its essence, and therefore it resembles the immutability of God---it hath an amazing self-activity and power to move the body, and ten thousand other bodies around us, and therefore it resembles the life and omnipotence of God---the soul hath an inextinguishable thirst after fresh knowledge, or new ideas of truth, and thus it resembles the omniscience of God. Who but an idiot or a madman would undervalue, abuse, or expose to ruin a soul of such tremendous powers, of such infinite worth, and of such capacities of enjoying happiness, as long as God shall possess his own infinite perfections ?

To save this soul God employed his eternal mind : to redeem this soul the Son of God came down to dwell in the dust : one soul cost more than the starry heavens, more than the worth of all the angels of God : to convince this soul, the Holy Spirit has, in a moment, produced visible changes in the order of nature : to instruct and entertain this soul he has given a divine revelation of the glorious Gospel, and raised up the best men in all ages to employ their immortal powers and talents : to refine and enlarge this soul he has exerted his sanctifying grace : to inhabit this soul the eternal Spirit came down from heaven : to wash this soul the blood of God was shed : to clothe this soul the righteousness of God is wrought out : to beautify this soul divine grace is given : to comfort this soul the promises of God are made : to guard this soul legions of angels are every moment on the wing : to destroy this soul the devil's legions are hourly employed : to serve the interests of this soul the structure of the world is preserved : yea, for the sake of this soul the world itself was created : on the behalf of this soul the Lord Jesus incessantly pleads before the throne : to defend and preserve this soul God's infinite perfections are every moment exerted : to establish the peace, purity, and strength of this soul God swears a most tremendous OATH : and to raise the power and happiness of this soul to eternal heights, all heaven is prepared, and God absolutely and irrevocably bestows himself.

DR. RYLAND.

The Proper Employment of the Soul, but its natural Inability.

THE soul of man comes into the world endued with all those faculties which are comprehended under the names of understanding, memory, and affections : man has an Understanding, that can soar to unknown heights in science, and fathom the deepest mysteries of nature—powers of reasoning, which can penetrate the most secret recesses of knowledge, and develope the greatest intricacies—comprehension of mind to embrace, at once, an almost endless variety of important subjects : he is possessed of a Memory, which can preserve the record of past experience, and former acquisitions in knowledge, to an extent of which we know not the limits : man has a Heart too—a heart that can flame with love, or rankle with hatred—

that can burn with anger, or smile with complacency—a heart which can be elevated with hope, or depressed with fear—exulting with joy, or agonised with sorrow. When all these passions and powers of the soul are called into exercise, by those occasions which were intended by God to excite them, it is in its right state—it lives : this will be allowed ; but how does it appear that we are dead ? Can any one be at a loss to know what those occasions are ? What is the appropriate object of all the faculties of the soul ? can any one doubt whether the proper and peculiar employment of the understanding be not to meditate on the glories of that God, whose power and goodness called us into being and gave us a reasonable soul ?—whether it is not appropriately exercised when it adores, in the works of the creation, the hand of the great Architect ; or when it refers every event of providence to the immediate agency of that wise Governor, who sits at the helm ? will any one hesitate to allow that every passion of the soul should point to God ?—whether we should not love him most, who is indeed the most amiable ; and fear him most, who is the most terrible in his anger ?—whether we ought not to hate that most, which most he hates ; and rejoice in that most, which most he approves ?—and whether, though we may admire, love, fear, and rejoice in certain created things, we are not in all seasons to have all our thoughts ultimately converging to God ? That this is the reasonable condition of the soul and these its appropriate employments, is perfectly obvious to any one who will reflect that God is, in fact, the All in All of the universe—that nothing exists without him—that nothing is good or beautiful without him—that nothing can give us pleasure without his agency : he pervades the universe—he surrounds it—he upholds it—he fills it ! it is all his own : he does every thing in it. Is the human soul, then, designed to do any thing but for God ? the Scripture, however, summarily confirms the conclusions of our reason ; for it says, *the Lord hath made all things for himself*. But does the soul of man naturally thus embrace the Deity, as the only suitable object of his affections ? do we not know that God is in none of his thoughts, instead of being in all of them ? he has passions, indeed, and the sensibility of them is sometimes vivid ; but the

exercise of them is invariably confined to the things of this world, and never voluntarily and naturally ascends to God : set the Deity before him as an amiable, faithful, and gracious Being—such an exhibition excites no emotion in his breast—no love, no joy, no confidence : array Jehovah in his terrors before the sinner—he will shrink, but he does not relent—he fears punishment, but he does not fear God : change the theme, and tell him of the wonders of redeeming love—here is employment for his understanding to trace the wisdom of God in the plan of redemption, and scope for the exercise of his affections in the consideration of the love of Christ and his own interest in it :—but no ! nothing of this sort can gain his attention :—it possesses no interest for him—he is deaf to *the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely* : strike what string you will, there is no chord in his heart that sounds in unison. What must we say of the state of that soul ?—that it is dead ; for it performs no one function of spiritual life : all in it is torpid—inanimate—dead ! There is a further propriety in calling the natural state of the soul by the name of death : there is in the dead body no power to return to life ; neither is there in the soul any ability to attain to spiritual life, or the exercise of holy affections toward God : nay, more—there is no Will to this end—a paralytic person may have no power to use his limbs, but he may possess the desire—whereas a dead person has not even the desire—so the natural soul has no will to live again unto God. There is in the dead body no spark of life, which time or care may fan into a flame : it will remain a corpse : nothing but the power of God can raise it from the dead. In like manner there is in the natural man no latent principle of spiritual life : without a Divine Intercessor, he must ever remain as he is : no good education, or good resolutions, as they are called, will ever make him a good man, except there be a superadded principle from above—a change wrought in him by an Eternal Agent—life put into him by the Spirit of God. He is, however, not so dead, but there is an ability to commit sin ; and, therefore, he is said to be *dead in trespasses and sins* : it is a life full of dead acts—a sort of dying life—a living death—a life which is all death.

REV. H. MARTYN.

The Soul not sufficient for its own Happiness.

I MIGHT further add as a *mantissa* to this present argument, the tranquillity and composedness of a good man's spirit in reference to all external molestations. Religion having made a thorough pacification of the soul within itself, renders it impregnable to all outward assaults: so that it is at rest, and lives securely in the midst of all those boisterous storms and tempests which make such violent impressions upon the spirits of wicked men. Here the Stoics have stated the case aright, that all perturbations of the mind arise not properly from an outward but an inward cause: it is not any outward evil but an inward imagination bred in the womb of the soul itself, that molests and grieves it. The more the soul is restored to itself, and lives at the height of its own being, the more easily may it disdain and despise any design or combination against it by the most blustering giants in the world. A Christian that enjoys himself in God, will not be beholden to the world's fair and gentle usage for the composedness of his mind: no; he enjoys that peace and tranquillity within himself which no creature can bestow upon him, or take from him.

But the Stoics were not so happy in their notions about the way to true rest and composedness of spirit. It is not (by their leave) the soul's collecting and gathering up itself within the circumference of its own essence; nor is it a rigid restraining and keeping in its own issues and motions within the confines of its own natural endowments, which is able to confer upon it that *ἀραπαξία* and composedness of mind which they so much idolise, as the supreme and only bliss of man, and render it free from all kind of perturbations: for by what we find in Seneca and others, it appears, that the Stoics seeking an autarchy within themselves, and being loath to be beholden to God for their happiness, but that each of them might be as God, self-sufficient and happy in the enjoyment of himself, endeavoured by their sour doctrine and a rigid discipline over their souls, their severities against passions and all those restless motions in the soul after some higher good, to attain a complete *ἀραπαξία* and a full contentment within themselves. But

herein the true method of finding rest to themselves escaped them, it being the union of the soul with God, that uniform, simple, and unbounded good, which is the sole original of all true inward peace. Neither were it a happiness worth the having, for a mind, like a hermit sequestered from all things else, by a recession into itself, to spend an eternity in self-converse, and the enjoyment of such a diminutive superficial nothing as itself is, and must necessarily be to itself. It is only peculiar to God to be happy in himself alone; and God who has been more liberal in his provisions for man, hath created in man such a spring of restless motion, that with the greatest impatience forceth him out of himself, and violently tosseth him to and fro, till he come to fix himself upon some solid and self-subsistent goodness. Could a man find himself withdrawn from all terrene and material things, and perfectly retired into himself; were the whole world so quiet and calm about him, as not to offer to make the least attempt upon the composedness and constancy of his mind; might he be so well entertained at his own home, as to find no frowns, no sour looks from his own conscience; might he have that security from heaven, that God would not disquiet his fancied tranquillity by imbittering his thoughts with any dreadful apprehensions; yet he should find something within him that would not let him be at rest, but would rend him from himself, and toss him from his own foundation and consistency. There is an insatiable appetite in the soul of man, like a greedy lion hunting after his prey, that would render him impatient of his own pinching penury, and could never satisfy itself within such a thin and spare diet as he finds at home. There are two principal faculties in the soul which, like the two daughters of the horseleech, are always crying *Gire, gire*: these are those hungry vultures which, if they cannot find their prey abroad, return and gnaw the soul itself: *where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together*. By this we may see how unavailable to the attaining of true rest and peace that conceit of the Stoics was, who supposed the only way and method hereto was this, to confine the soul thus monastically to its own home. We read in the Gospel of such a question of our Saviour's, *What went you*

out into the wilderness to see? Matt. xi. 7. We may invert it, What do you return within to see? A soul confined within the private and narrow cell of its own particular being? Such a soul deprives itself of all that almighty and essential glory and goodness which shines round about it, which spreads itself through the whole universe: I say it deprives itself of all this, for the enjoying of such a poor, petty, and diminutive thing as itself is, which yet it can never enjoy truly in such a tiredness.

We have seen the peaceful and happy state of the truly religious: but it is otherwise with wicked and irreligious men. *There is no peace to the wicked; but they are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt,* as it is expressed by the prophet Isaiah, lvii. 20, 21. The mind of a wicked man is like the sea when it roars and rages through the striving of several contrary winds upon it. Furious lusts and wild passions within, as they war against heaven and the more noble and divine part of the soul, so they war among themselves, maintaining perpetual contests, and contending which shall be the greatest: *scelera dissident*. These indeed are the Cadmus-brood rising out of the serpent's teeth, ready armed one against another: whence it is that the soul of a wicked man becomes a very uninhabitable and incommodious place to itself, full of disquietness and trouble, through the many contests and civil commotions maintained within it. The minds of wicked men are like those disconsolate and desolate spirits which our Saviour speaks of, which being cast out of their habitation, wander up and down through dry and desert places, *seeking rest but finding none*, Matt. xii. 43. The soul that finds not some solid and self-sufficient good to centre itself upon, is a boisterous and restless thing; and being without God, it wanders up and down in the world, destitute, afflicted, tormented with vehement hunger and thirst after some satisfying good; and, as any one shall bring it tidings, *Lo here, or lo there is good*, it presently goes out towards it, and with a swift and speedy flight hastens after it. The sense of an inward indigency doth stimulate and enforce it to seek its contentment without itself, and so it wanders up and down from one creature to another; and thus

becomes distracted by a multiplicity of objects. And while it cannot find some one and only object upon which, as being perfectly adequate to its capacities, it may wholly bestow itself; while it is tossed with restless and vehement motions of desire and love through a world of painted beauties, false glozing excellencies; courting all, but matching nowhere; violently hurried every where, but finding nowhere *objectum par amori*; while it converseth only with these pinching particularities here below, and is not yet acquainted with the universal goodness; it is certainly far from true rest and satisfaction, from a fixed, composed temper of spirit: but being distracted by multiplicity of objects and ends, there can never be any firm and stable peace or friendship at home amongst all its powers and faculties: nor can there be a firm amity and friendship abroad betwixt wicked men themselves, as Aristotle concludes in his Ethics, because all vice is so multiform and inconsistent a thing, and so there can be no true concatenation of affections and ends between them. Whereas in all good men, virtue and goodness is one form and soul to them all, that unites them together, and there is the one, simple, and uniform good, that guides and governs them all. They are not as a ship tossed in the tumultuous ocean of this world without any compass at all to steer by; but they direct their course by the certain guidance of the one last end, as the true pole-star of all their motion. But while the soul lies benighted in a thick ignorance, as it is with wicked men, and beholds not some stable and eternal good towards which it may move; though it may, by the strength of that principle of activeness within itself spend itself perpetually with swift and giddy motions; yet it will be always contesting with secret disturbances, and cannot act but with many reluctances, as not finding an object equal to the force and strength of its vast affections to act upon.

By what hath been said, may appear the vast difference between the ways of sin and of holiness. Inward distractions and disturbances, *tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doth evil: but to every man that worketh good, glory, honor, and peace*, Rom. ii. 9, 10; inward composedness and tranquillity of spirit, pure and divine joys, far excelling all sen-

sual pleasures; in a word, true contentment of spirit and full satisfaction in God, whom the pious soul loves above all things, and longs still after a nearer enjoyment of him. I shall conclude this particular with what Plotinus concludes

his book, that the life of holy and divine men is 'a life not touched with these vanishing delights of time, but a flight of the soul alone to God alone.'

REV. J. SMITH.

SECTION VII.—THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

Distinction between the Law and the Gospel.

ALL this is closely connected with a subject on which the Reformers constantly insist as of the utmost importance, but the just views of which, they asserted, had long disappeared from the church; namely, the difference between the law and the Gospel—between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. And, though we have learned from them to acknowledge the wide difference between the two, yet it is to be apprehended that, could they return upon earth, they would renew their complaints against many of their professed followers among protestant teachers.—The Law of God requires holiness of heart and life; and the Gospel of Christ requires the same: yea, and there is not a precept of Christ which may not be referred to one or other of the commands of the decalogue: *it* was a summary of *his* injunctions, and *his* injunctions are an expansion of *its* precepts. Where then is the difference of the two?—The Gospel indeed promises pardon and acceptance through faith; but still that faith, it is acknowledged, cannot be separated from obedience—any faith that can be so separated is unavailing: and even the law of the ten commandments speaks of 'mercy' to the obedient. Where then again is the difference of the two?—Let every young divine carefully study these points, and be furnished with distinct answers to these questions, imploring of God by his Holy Spirit to grant him a right understanding of them; for he may be assured that they involve the very essence of the directions to be given to a soul anxiously inquiring the way to salvation—whatever is necessary to its peace, and to its real sanctification and obedience. Here to confound 'things which differ' is to mingle heaven and earth.—But this is done whenever the Gospel is considered as *a mitigated law*,

'The Law,' some would say, 'required *perfect*, but the Gospel accepts of *sincere* obedience. *This* is the difference between them.'—Such an answer, it has been justly said, combines the apparently opposite errors, of pharisaism and antinomianism: the former, by teaching men to rely on their own imperfect obedience, and not simply on Christ; the latter, by making the Most Holy to require only what is imperfect—that is to tolerate, or even sanction evil.—This answer shews, therefore, an utter misapprehension of both the law and the Gospel.—'But what,' it may be asked, 'is it not true, that *under* the Gospel persons who render a *sincere*, but yet imperfect obedience, shall be saved? and that those who withhold such obedience shall not be saved?' It is: but the error lies,—and a most essential error it is—in mistaking the *place* to be assigned to Christian obedience, and the *purposes* which it is to answer. It is not to take the place which perfect obedience under the Law, or covenant of works, was to hold: that is, it is in no way or degree to answer the purpose of justifying us, or forming our title to eternal life. That purpose is to be answered by the *obedience unto death* of the Son of God for us, and by that exclusively: and our interest in his merits for our justification is to be attained only by faith in him—*simply receiving* the benefit which is *freely given*.—Then again, though the faith through which we are thus justified must be a 'living faith,' which 'works by love,' and *produces* obedience, yet, considered as achieving our justification, it is not properly said to *include* obedience: the obedience which it produces by no means goes before our justification, to take any part in *procuring* us that blessing, but it 'follows after,' (Church Art. xii.) to *prove* us justified. And in this way only is it that the Gospel admits of '*sincere but imperfect obedience*:' not as a substitute for

the perfect obedience required by the law, (for that the merits of Christ are the real and only substitute,) but for quite another purpose—the purpose only of proving the sincerity of our faith and love—a purpose which it may well answer, though it could never satisfy any law, that the absolute holiness of the Divine Being could suffer him to promulgate. ‘Faith is the only hand which putteth on Christ to justification, and Christ the only garment which, being so put on, covereth the shame of our defiled natures, hideth the imperfection of our works, preserveth us blameless in the sight of God; before whom otherwise the weakness of our faith were cause sufficient to make us culpable—yea, to shut us from the kingdom of heaven, where nothing that is not absolute can enter.’ (Hooker of Justification, § 31.)

Such, we venture to affirm, are the views of our own articles, homilies, and liturgy, and such those of the Reformers at large. Let us now see how they are exhibited in this important work of Melancthon.*

“Christ has not succeeded to Moses’ place, by propounding a new Law, called the Gospel . . . he only explains the Law already given, because grace cannot be proclaimed without the Law. . . . He preaches the law, because without the law sins cannot be known; and, where sin is not felt, the force and riches of grace cannot be understood. Neither the gospel can be rightly and successfully taught without the law, nor the law without the gospel.”—

“But, when you reflect thus, ‘How great

is the misery of mankind, oppressed by sin, by the wrath of God, and by death!’ and when you perceive that the voice of the law is the sentence, the bond, the witness, and the announcer of God’s immense wrath against sin; then always look upon the Son of God standing close at hand: consider his sacrifice, who alone sustained the wrath of God for us, bore the curse of the law, and propitiated the Father to us. Reflect on the benefit conferred by the Son—that it superabounds over sin.”—

“The promises of Scripture are twofold. Some are annexed to the law; but they carry with them the condition of fulfilling the law. These fall in with the dictates of natural reason—that God is gracious, but to the innocent and deserving. But those who are conscious that they are unworthy and unholy can hence derive no consolation. The other kind of promises are peculiar to the gospel; and these do not carry with them that condition of having fulfilled the law, as the ground of obtaining the blessing, but propose it freely for Christ’s sake. Such are the promises of the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, or justification, of which the gospel especially treats. If these were suspended on the condition of our fulfilling the law, so that we had to reflect, ‘When I have satisfied the law, then I shall have forgiveness of sins:’ in this case despair must be the consequence. Therefore these blessings are given freely, not for our desert.—Yet some offering, some sacrifice was necessary for us: and for this cause Christ was given, and became our sacrifice, that we might be assured that we are acceptable to God for his sake. . . . Hence St. Paul so urgently presses upon our notice this particle, *gratis, freely. It is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure*, Rom. iii. 24. iv. 16, &c. This clause, *Gratuitously, for Christ’s sake*, constitutes the essential difference between the Gospel and the Law. If we do not observe that the promise is gratuitous, doubt overhangs our minds, THE GOSPEL IS TRANSFORMED INTO THE LAW, and affords us no more assurance of forgiveness, or justification, than the law did, or even than natural reason might do. . . . The mind’s eye therefore must be fixed upon this particle, *gratis, freely*. Without this, it will find no sure consolation under genuine alarms of conscience.”

REV. JOHN SCOTT.

* If any should think that in these observations I dwell more on the *obedience* of Christ, as performed for our benefit, and not merely on his atoning sufferings, than Melancthon does in the following extracts; I admit that I may have done so; and in doing it I think I am borne out by the Scriptures, as well as by the writings of our church, whose language is, “He for them paid their ransom by his death: He for them fulfilled the law in his life; so that now in him, and by him, every true Christian man may be called a *fulfiller of the law*.” Yet on the precise way of stating this point I have no controversy with any man, who explicitly disclaims the idea, that, when Christ has once freed us from guilt and condemnation, we are to intitle ourselves to eternal life by our own obedience; and who from first to last ascribes our acceptance, and admission to heaven, to the “merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith only.”—We may add, that Melancthon elsewhere, expressly in answer to the objection that ‘the righteousness of Christ is nowhere in Scripture said to be imputed to us,’ quotes the three texts, Rom. v. 19. 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 21. —Consil. ii. 140.

The Law and the Gospel contrasted.

LET imagination, therefore, place us for a few minutes at the foot of Sinai, where every man must place himself, who would form an estimate of the salvation wrought for him by Jesus Christ. We shall find the mountain carefully fenced about, and guarded by this awful prohibition : *Charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish.—For if so much as a beast touch the mountain, he shall be stoned, or struck through with a dart. Take heed to yourselves therefore ; stand at the nether part of the mount,* Exod. xix. 12. 17. 21. There, then, let us take our station, and behold a thick cloud, blackness of darkness, settling upon the mountain, and diffusing itself around ; in the midst of this most horrible night, the flame of devouring fire rolling forth in dreadful waves, and burning to the midst of heaven ; lightnings every moment issuing from it, and breaking through the surrounding gloom ; the air incessantly thundering from every quarter ; and, above all, the voice of a trumpet piercing the heavens, sounding long, and waxing louder and louder ; the mountain smoking like a furnace, and quaking greatly from its foundations ; all the people in the camp trembling and dying for fear : nay, *so terrible was the sight, that even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake,* Heb. xii. 21. And if Moses, who, as the figure of him that should come, had the honor to be a mediator between an offended God and his offended people—if he exceedingly feared and quaked at this terrible sight, what must be the state of the careless sinner, who having incurred all this heavy displeasure, nor ever employed an hour in meditating his escape, shall be suddenly called upon by death to meet it all, unprepared ? And who is there among us, that thinks himself prepared to meet his God, as he appeared upon Mount Sinai ? Let the experiment be made only in an ordinary tempest of thunder and lightning. No sooner is that glorious voice of Jehovah heard in the heavens, but the earth trembles and is still. *Hear attentively, said Elihu in Job, the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning to the ends of the earth. At this my heart trembleth, and is moved*

out of his place, Job xxxvii. 1, 2, 3. What sensations then would be produced in the hearts even of the best of men by a manifestation like that at Sinai ? And if the righteous scarcely sustain it, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ?

Nor let any man think himself unconcerned in that scene because it is past. The terrors of Mount Sinai are still in force against every one who is not found in Christ Jesus ; unless we suppose that the despisers of the gospel will fare better than the contemners of the law, and not rather be thought worthy of much sorer punishment. The hour is coming, when our eyes shall see more amazing sights, and our ears shall hear more terrifying sounds, than were seen and heard by the house of Israel in the wilderness. For yet a little while, and the same God who was revealed from heaven in flaming fire to give the law, shall again be revealed from heaven in flaming fire to inquire how it hath been observed, and to take vengeance on those who have not secured unto themselves a sponsor to stand in the gap for them. So that although the things seen and heard at Mount Sinai did not affect us, yet the argument enlarged upon by the apostle, Heb. xii. undoubtedly doth ; namely, that if the law was so terrible when enacted, how much more terrible must it be, when required at our hands by God, coming in glorious majesty to judge the world ! Then shall there be blackness of darkness, not for a time, but for ever ; then shall the lightnings of Sinai be extended over all the earth, and a fire be kindled which shall not be quenched ; then shall the heavens pass away with the noise of a great and intolerable thunder ; a far louder trumpet shall then not only pierce the ears of the living, but also sound an alarm through all the regions of the grave, and awaken those who shall have slept for ages in the dust ; then he whose voice formerly shook the earth shall fulfil his promise, *Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven,* Heb. xii. 26 ; both of which shall be removed, and their place no more be found : then shall all the tribes of the earth, as well as those of Israel, tremble, and mourn, and wail ; and who, where is he, that thinketh he shall not then find cause to say with Moses, *So terrible is the sight, that I exceedingly fear and quake ?*

Such, therefore, is the wrath which the

law worketh, and such is the condemnation of that 'hand-writing against us,' from which our dear Master and Redeemer, as at this time, the time of his circumcision, engaged to rescue all who should believe in him. Then it was, that he took upon himself the law, and the penalty annexed to the breach of it, *being*, as an apostle has expressed it, *made a curse for us, to redeem us from the curse of the law*, Gal. iii. 13; that is, to deliver us from the black darkness of sin and death; from the thunders and lightnings of the Father's vengeance; from the dread of the trumpet of eternal judgment; the dissolution and destruction of the world; the words of condemnation, and the unextinguishable flame; and having delivered us from all these terrors, to introduce us to a far different scene of things; to the light of righteousness and immortality; to the peace and love of God; to the still small voice of evangelical grace; to the harps of angels, and the music of hallelujahs; to the final sentence of absolution, *Come, ye blessed*; to a kingdom that cannot be moved; to the joys of heaven, and the glories of eternity. *For we are not come unto the mount that might be touched* (the palpable, material mount), *that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more, (for they could not endure that which was commanded; and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake).* But we are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb. xii. 18, &c.; the one crying as loud for mercy as the other did for vengeance. And therefore, when this blood of sprinkling was first shed, *when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel, before he was*

conceived in the womb, saying, *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins*, Matt. i. 21.

BP. HORNE.

Harmony between the Law and the Gospel.

I SHALL conclude the doctrinal part of this discourse, by pointing out, in a few words, the harmony and agreement between them; for although there be all these differences between the Law and the Gospel, yet there is no feud between them. They sweetly stand together in their proper place; the law is not against the gospel, nor the gospel against the law; no, there is a pleasant harmony, which will appear, if we consider, that by the gospel the law reaches its end; *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*. In the gospel we see the law fulfilled as a covenant, and settled as a rule of obedience. I say, it is fulfilled as a covenant by the righteousness revealed in the gospel; yea, not only fulfilled, but *magnified and made honorable*, a new and superadded glory reflected upon it by Christ, the Son of God, his being *made under the law, to redeem us who were under the law*. And then by the gospel it is also settled as a rule of obedience; *Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law*, Rom. iii. 31. The gospel brings to light new motives and arguments to obedience, which the law itself, abstractly considered, could never afford, namely, arguments drawn from the consideration of redeeming grace and love, which have a more constraining power to obedience with an ingenuous spirit, than all the curses and penalties that the law denounces against those who do not continue in obedience thereto.

Again, the harmony of the Law and Gospel appears in this, that the law paves the way to the entertainment of gospel grace; for it is a *schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ, that we may be justified by faith*. The law is a lance in the hand of the chirurgeon to open the ulcer of sin and corruption within us; the gospel, as a medicinal balsam, drains and gradually heals it, when applied in a way of believing: the law is a plough to till up the fallow ground of the heart of man; the gospel is the good seed cast into the furrows, which being impregnated by the dew of heaven, makes it spring up to everlasting

life: the law is as a hammer to break the rock in pieces; the gospel dissolves it with the warm fire of the *love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost*. Thus the law is subservient to the great design of the gospel.

Again, what the Law teaches preceptively, the Gospel teaches effectively; the law enjoins the duty, the gospel furnishes with grace to obey it; there is no duty the law requires, but there is suitable furniture in the gospel promise to discharge it. Doth the law require us to *know the Lord*, which is the first precept in the moral law? Well, here is suitable grace provided in the Gospel; *I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord*. Doth the law require us to *trust in him at all times*? Well, the gospel promise is suited unto this; *They shall trust in the name of the Lord*, Zeph. iii. 12. Doth it require of us to *love the Lord our God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind*? Here is gospel grace to effect it; *I will circumcise their hearts to love the Lord their God*. Doth it crave obedience, saying, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*? Well, the grace of the gospel says, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them*. Doth the law enjoin us to *sanctify the Lord in our hearts, and make him our fear and our dread*? The grace of the promise exactly suits that; *I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me*. Doth the law require us to *call on the name of the Lord*, to *worship and serve him*? The gospel promises that *the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured out to help our infirmities, and to teach us to pray*, and *praise*, and perform other acts of worship. Does the law enjoin us to repent and turn from the evil of our ways? The gospel promises the *heart of flesh* in place of the *heart of stone*; and tells us that *God sent his Son to bless us, in turning away every one of us from our iniquities*. Thus you see that what the law teaches preceptively, the gospel teaches effectively.

Again, I might tell you, that the harmony between the Law and the Gospel appears in this, that the law discovers the sinner's duty, and the gospel discovers the object of duty; the law enjoins faith, the gospel lifts up Christ the object of faith: *As Moses lifted up the serpent in*

the wilderness, even so is the Son of man lifted up, viz. upon the gospel pole; *that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life*. The law enjoins the sinner to love God with all the heart; but it is the gospel only that presents God in such a view, as to become an object of love to a guilty sinner; namely, as he is a reconciled God and Father in Christ; for viewing God absolutely, as he is presented in the glass of the holy law, he is an object of terror instead of love. The law enjoins us to turn from sin under the pain of eternal wrath and vengeance; the gospel shows the sinner a refuge unto which he is to turn; *Turn ye to your strong hold, ye prisoners of hope*. The law enjoins mourning for sin; *Rend your hearts and not your garments*; the gospel presents a crucified Christ, *wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities*, whom when the sinner views by faith, he *mourns, as one doth for an only son, and is in bitterness, as one is in bitterness for a first-born*. The law requires us to worship the Lord our God; the gospel discovers both the object and the way of worship; I say, the gospel discovers the object of worship, namely, a God in Christ, and the way to the holiest opened by the blood of Jesus.

To conclude; the Law by its terror sweeps away the refuge of lies; the Gospel discovers a new foundation of hope and help, saying, *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; and he that believeth on him, shall not be confounded*. The law saps the foundation of sand, and overturns the tower that the sinner was building in order to reach heaven by it; the gospel discovers the Rock of Ages upon which the sinner may build his house, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. The law, when viewed spiritually, drives the sinner out of himself, by discovering his emptiness, poverty, and misery; the gospel draws and invites him out of himself, by discovering the allfulness of a Redeemer to supply his wants, though never so great. The law lets the man see that he has no money nor price; the gospel shows, that though he has no money nor price, yet he may come and buy *gold tried in the fire, white raiment, and eye-salve*. The law lets the sinner see that he is shut up in a pit, wherein there is no water; the gospel shows how

the sinner, by the blood of God's covenant, may come forth out of the pit, and opens a *fountain of living water*, where he may *draw* and *drink* with *joy*. The law leads us to Christ for righteousness; the gospel sends us to the law as a rule of obedience, *as a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths*. Thus the whole life and work of a Christian is a continual traffic from the law to the gospel, and from the gospel back again to the law as a rule. So much then shall serve for clearing the harmony and agreement betwixt the Law and the Gospel.

REV. EBEN. ERSKINE.

The Covenant at Sinai.

THE covenant made with Israel at Mount Sinai was not formally the covenant of works, 1st. Because that cannot be renewed with the sinner, in such a sense as to say, If, for the future, thou shalt perfectly perform every instance of obedience, thou shalt be justified by that, according to the covenant of works. For, by this, the pardon of former sins would be pre-supposed, which the covenant of works excludes. 2dly. Because God did not require perfect obedience from Israel, as a condition of this covenant, as a clause of claiming the reward; but sincere obedience, as an evidence of reverence and gratitude. 3dly. Because it did not conclude Israel under the curse, in the sense peculiar to the covenant of works, where all hope of pardon was cut off, if they sinned but in the least instance.

However the carnal Israelites, not adverting to God's purpose or intention, as they ought, mistook the true meaning of that covenant, embraced it as a covenant of works, and by it sought for righteousness. Paul declares this; *but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness; wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone*, Rom. ix. 31, 32. To the same purpose it is, that, Gal. iv. 24, 25, he compares to the Ishmaelites the Israelites, while they tarried in the deserts of Arabia, which was the country of the former, who are born to bondage of their mother Hagar, or the covenant of Mount Sinai, and being destitute of true righteousness, shall, with Ishmael, be at length turned out of the house of their heavenly

Father. For, in that place, Paul does not consider the covenant of Mount Sinai as in itself, and in the intention of God, offered to the elect, but as abused by carnal and hypocritical men. Let Calvin again speak: 'The Apostle declares, that, by the children of Sinai, he meant hypocrites, persons who are at length cast out of the Church of God, and disinherited. What therefore is that generation unto bondage, which he there speaks of? It is doubtless those who basely abuse the law, and conceive nothing concerning it but what is servile. The pious fathers who lived under the Old Testament did not so. For, the servile generation of the law did not hinder them from having the spiritual Jerusalem for their mother. But they, who stick to the bare Law, and acknowledge not its pedagogy, by which they are brought to Christ, but rather make it an obstacle to their coming to him, these are Ishmaelites (for thus, and I think rightly, Morlorat reads) born unto bondage.' The design of the apostle, therefore, in that place, is not to teach us, that the covenant of Mount Sinai was nothing but a covenant of works, altogether opposite to the gospel covenant; but only that the gross Israelites misunderstood the mind of God, and basely abused his covenant; as all such do, who seek for righteousness by the law. See again Calvin on Rom. x. 4.

Nor was it formally a covenant of grace: because that requires not only obedience, but also promises, and bestows strength to obey. For, thus the covenant of grace is made known, *and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever*, Jer. xxxii. 39. But such a promise appears not in the covenant made at Mount Sinai. Nay; God, on this very account, distinguishes the new covenant of grace from the Sinaitic, Jer. xxxi. 31—33. And Moses loudly proclaims, *yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day*, Deut. xxix. 4. Certainly, the chosen from among Israel had obtained this. Yet not in virtue of this covenant, which stipulated obedience, but gave no power for it: but in virtue of the covenant of grace, which also belonged to them.

What was it then? It was a *national covenant* between God and Israel, whereby Israel promised to God a sincere obedience to all his precepts, especially to the ten words; God, on the other hand, pro-

mised to Israel, that such an observance would be acceptable to him, nor want its reward, both in this life and in that which is to come, both as to soul and body. This reciprocal promise supposed a covenant of grace. For, without the assistance of the covenant of grace, man cannot sincerely promise that observance; and yet that an imperfect observance should be acceptable to God is wholly owing to the covenant of grace. It also supposed the doctrine of the covenant of works, the terror of which being increased by those tremendous signs that attended it, they ought to have been excited to embrace that covenant of God. This agreement therefore is a consequent both of the covenant of grace and of works; but was formally neither the one nor the other. A like agreement and renewal of the covenant between God and the pious is frequent; both national and individual. Of the former see Josh. xxiv. 22. 2 Chron. xv. 12. 2 Kings xxiii. 3. Neh. x. 29. Of the latter, Psal. cxix. 106. It is certain, that in the passages we have named, mention is made of some covenant between God and his people. If any one should ask me, of what kind, whether of works or of grace? I shall answer, it is formally neither; but a covenant of sincere piety, which supposes both. WITSIUS.

Uses of the Law.

THE state of man, to which the Law has its peculiar relations, is threefold: viz. his *first*, his *fallen*, and his *restored* state. In his *first* state, it was to man, first the rule of his nature and of all his actions, to which he willingly, and with the greatest complacency of soul conformed himself. 2dly, The most excellent beautiful ornament of man, as stamped and impressed by the creating hand of God on his mind. 3dly, The condition of the covenant of works, which man himself was to perform in order to obtain consummate bliss and happiness.

In his *fallen state* it serves, 1st, To discover and convince man of his sin, *by the law is the knowledge of sin*, Rom. iii. 20. And the precepts of the law do this two ways. *First*, as in a mirror, they discover to man the vileness both of his life and actions, James i. 23. *Then* by its irritating virtue, whereby, on account of human depravity, they stir up sin, which otherwise lay dormant; so that, like one galled by a bridle, the more strictly sin is prohibited

and restrained, the more vehemently it resists and makes opposition, every thing that would keep it under being offensive to it. The apostle excellently illustrates this, Rom. vii. 7. 13. 2dly, To denounce the curse against man; which it does by its comminations: *now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*, Rom. iii. 19. 3dly, To be a restraint upon men, and bring them to some external honest deportment, in order to preserve civil government, and prevent the destruction of mankind by adulteries, rapines, oppressions, and the like heinous crimes. The apostle seems particularly to intimate this office of the law, when he says, *that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners*, &c. 1 Tim. i. 9. For, he shews, that it is a curb to those prevailing lusts of the flesh, which otherwise would be immoderately extravagant. 4thly, To bring sinners to Christ: *for, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 4. *The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*, Gal. iii. 24. This is not only true of the ceremonial, but also of the law of the decalogue, which brings to Christ these two ways: first, as it really keeps an elect person, while in an unconverted state, in some measure, in the way of his duty, that he may not obstinately neglect all concern for righteousness and his soul. For, where the Spirit of God does not yet bear rule, sinful lusts break forth there, in such a manner, that the soul, which is obnoxious to them, is in danger of sinking into forgetfulness and contempt of God. And they would actually do this, did not the Lord put a bar thereto by this remedy of his law. But principally the law brings to Christ, as it strips man of all confidence in his own goodness and righteousness, and, by an acknowledgment of his misery, deeply humbles him, that so he may be thus prepared to endeavour after, what before he thought he did not stand in need of.

In the state of *restoration* it teacheth believers: 1st, How perfect the obedience was, which Christ performed for them, and how much they are under obligations to him, since he, who was Lord of the law, subjected himself to it for them, not only to obey its precepts, but to endure the

curse, that he might redeem them from the law, Gal. iv. 4, 5. 2dly, At what distance they still are from that perfection of holiness which the law requires, in order the better to bring them to humility, and to a denial of all self-righteousness, Phil. iii. 8, 9, and a longing after a blessed perfection, Rom. vii. 24. 3dly, What is the rule of their gratitude, and the mark at which they ought to aim, Phil. iii. 12. 1 Tim. i. 5. 4thly, and lastly, It bears witness to, approves and commends, the beginnings of sanctification, and comforts those as being true Israelites, who *delight in the law of God after the inward man*. The law does this, not from its own authority, which can admit of nothing but what is perfectly holy, and condemns every thing that is stained but with the least spot; but from the authority of the grace of Christ, to whom it is now subservient, and at whose command it commends even the imperfect works of believers, declares them to be sincere, and so far approves of them as conformable to itself: and in that sense the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those *who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 7.

WITSIUS.

God's Law requireth nothing of us, but that which was in our nature before the fall, which we see is impossible for us to pay accordingly; and yet God, not unjust in that he asketh of us nothing thereby, but the self same thing which he gave us in our creation. The Law then, and the precepts of God were given after the fall of man, not that man should thereby get life and the thing which was lost by sin, (for the blessed Seed was promised for the recovering hereof and to him that pertained,) but that man by it might know sin, and what he had lost, thereby to desire more deeply the promised Seed, by whom as we be received, so our evils be not imputed, and that we being renewed by his Holy Spirit and new seed, should as newborn babes desire, and by will begin to do the Law of God, which after our deliverance forth of this corrupt body, and man of sin, by death, we shall without all let fully accomplish, and at the length receive the body to be spiritual (as Paul saith) and holy, ready to obey and serve the Spirit, as a helper, rather than a hinderer. Oh! happy day, when wilt thou appear!

I would have the end wherefore God

gave his Law to be considered, namely, not for man to get thereby eternal life, which appertained to the promised Seed; but to shew man what sin is, and what by sin he lost, that he might by his inability be driven to desire of very necessity the promised Messias, and so by him to receive the Spirit; where through being regenerate, he might learn to love the Law, to take it as a directory and rule to live by, and to hedge in his old man from controlling. JOHN BRADFORD. (MARTYR.)

The Christian feels the advantage of the law too well, to be willing, with the Antinomian, to cast it off, because it has lost its justifying power. For what an enlarged view does he gain even from its *covenant form* of the necessity, character, and excellency of the Gospel! The intervention of a Surety, a Redeemer, and an atonement, was the effect of Divine determination to *magnify the Law, and make it honorable*, Isaiah xlii. 21; that God might honorably pardon, justify, and save, those who had transgressed its sanctions. Without therefore a view of the excellency of the law, both in its precept and its penalty, no sufficient reason appears for the sufferings and death of Immanuel. Thus *the glory of the Ministration of condemnation* commends the exceeding glory of *the Ministration of life and righteousness*, 2 Cor. iii. 7-9. The same glass exhibits to us *indirectly* what the Gospel shows us in *direct terms*—our infinite obligation to the love of Christ for what he has become, done, and suffered in our place. The greatness of his astonishing condescension is our constraining bond to his service, whose obedience has answered all the demands and suffered all the penalties standing against us, and *brought in everlasting righteousness* as our ground of acceptance before God. REV. C. BRIDGES.

The Law as a Rule of Life.

SOME little difficulty has been introduced into this subject by refiners in Christianity, who, under the idea of magnifying the grace of God, seem desirous of excluding the very word Law from the Christian vocabulary, though *the law* in every respect *is good, if a man use it lawfully*. Hence a dispute has arisen, whether, in speaking of the rule of a believer's life, we must refer it to that which is properly

called the Law of God, or the Moral Law of Ten Commandments, delivered by Moses, or to the preceptive parts of the Gospel, or to the example of Christ, or to the whole word of God. The objection to the term Law has no doubt originated from always retaining, with the term, the idea of a covenant, connected with promises of life to obedience, and the threatening of death to every transgression. This, we have before observed, is not necessary; nor is it the most usual or exact Scriptural idea of the term, which more frequently implies simply a rule and directory. It is agreed on all hands, that the Law is no longer the covenant of life, upon which we are to stand for acceptance before God; that all legal motives and claims of merit are entirely done away. But, when the love of God is implanted in the heart of a justified, accepted, and believing sinner, the question must arise, How shall this love discover itself in a way which is pleasing to God? What is the *external rule* by which this *internal principle* must be regulated? Where is the direction which God has given us for this purpose? I see no safer, nor plainer way of answering the question, than that which has been common in the church of God from the beginning, to reply, that *the law of God is the rule of a believer's conduct*. In doing this we follow the footsteps of the flock, the example of the wisest and the best believers in the church of Christ. Indeed in this view, considering the law as divested of its covenant form, and alluding only to its directive precept, there appears to be no difference in this various application. For what is the example of Christ, but the perfect fulfilment, the living copy, of the law? What are the preceptive parts of the gospel, but the law evangelised; the gospel view of the same duties, which as to matter and form the law prescribes? What is the whole word of God, but the law amplified and explained? At least it must contain it as a part of that whole. And what is the Moral Law, but the epitome of that whole word? Since, then, we are not speaking of the ground and motive of obedience, it is evident, that the substance, the form, and the rule, of duty to a creature, must always be the same. If we were to compare, distinctly, every commandment of the law, with the declarations of the New Testament, we should discern that every

precept is there delivered again in an evangelical form, and sometimes even in the same words, and enforced by the same considerations: witness the five commandments in Eph. vi. 1-3. If we consider also the precepts of the Gospel, we shall perceive that they are included either in the letter, or at least in the spirit, of the Ten Commandments of the Moral Law. The apostles, therefore, seem to have been ignorant of these nice distinctions; for, if the Gospel precepts can be proved to be in substance the same as the Law of the Ten Commandments, and that it is there again delivered and enforced, though not in the exact form, it is surely most absurd to make it a matter of controversy, whether we shall read our rule of duty in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, in the Old Testament, or in the Gospels and Epistles in the New. It is surely as much a *vain jangling* about the law, as that which the apostle condemns; the guilt of which must rest upon those who have introduced the troublesome novelty.

Whenever, therefore, this view of the Law as the rule of life, gives distress to the mind, as it is said by such to do, or introduces legal fears to the dishonor of Christ, and the destruction of the believer's peace, it arises from secretly reverting to it as the covenant of life, and considering our obedience to it as the ground of our acceptance with God; though such fears may sometimes arise from a consciousness of general insincerity in the Christian profession, in which case they ought rather to be cherished till they have wrought a due conviction of guilt, and brought us penitent and believing to the Lord Jesus Christ, than to be checked as improper and needless. But if these fears arise from the consideration of the Law as a rule of conduct, it must be from misrepresentation: the same fears would arise from the establishment of any rule, to those that remain ignorant, through the self-righteous spirit of the natural heart. The example of Christ, or the Gospel precept, would have the very same effect as the commandment of the Law: yet no one will venture to affirm, that the believer is without rule. *Not without law to God*, says the apostle, *but under the Law to Christ*. The Law, it is allowed, can do nothing for us, as to quickening the mind to obedience; nor, indeed, can the Gospel precept, as it is an

outwardly written commandment. The apostle styles it, equally as the Law, *the killing letter*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. We must not, however, confound the inward efficacy with the outward direction, the vital principle with that which guides its exercises in the outward conduct.

REV. W. GOODE.

Distinction between the Law as a Covenant of Works, and the Law as a Rule of Life.

THE LAW may be considered either as a *Rule*, or as a *Covenant*. Christ hath freed all believers from the *rigour* and *curse* of the Law, considered *as a covenant*; but he hath not freed them from *obedience* to the Law, considered *as a rule*. And all those Scriptures that speak of the Law as if it were abrogated or annulled, take it considered *as a covenant*; those again that speak of the Law as if it were still in force, take it considered *as a rule*. The Law as a covenant, is *rigorous*; and under that rigour we now are not, if we be in Christ: but the Law as a rule is equal; and under that equity we still are, though we be in Christ.

The Law as *a rule* only showeth us, what is good and evil, what we are to do, and not to do. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee*; Mic. vi. 8. without any *condition* annexed either of *reward* if we observe it, or of *punishment* if we transgress it. But the Law, as *a covenant*, exacteth punctual and personal performance of every thing that is contained therein, with a *condition* annexed of God's *acceptance*, and of *blessing*, if we perform it to the full; but of his *wrath* and *curse* upon us, if we fail in any thing. Now by reason of transgression, we having broken all that covenant, the Law hath his work upon us, and involveth us all in *the curse*: Gal. iii. 10. so as by *the covenant of the Law*, vers. 11. no flesh living can be justified. Then cometh in Christ: who subjecting himself for our sakes to *the covenant of the Law*, first fulfilleth it in his own Person, but in our behalf, as our surety; and then disannulleth it, and instead thereof establisheth *a better covenant* Heb. viii. 6. for us, even *the Covenant of Grace*. So that now as many as believe, are free from the covenant of the Law, and from the curse of the Law; and set under a covenant of grace, and under

promises of grace. There is a translation then of the covenant: but what is all this to the rule? That is still where it was, even as the nature of good and evil is still the same it was; and the Law, considered as a rule, can no more be abolished or changed, than can the nature of good and evil be abolished or changed. It is our singular comfort then, and the happiest fruit of our *Christian liberty*, that we are freed by Christ, and through faith in him, from the covenant and curse of the Law: but we must know that it is our duty, notwithstanding the liberty that we have in Christ, to frame our lives and conversations according to the rule of the Law. Which if we shall neglect under the pretence of our Christian liberty; we must answer for both: both for neglecting our duty, and for abusing our liberty.

BP. SANDERSON.

Necessity of preaching the Law.

THIS shows the ignorance and absurdity of those men, who cry down preaching of the law, as a course leading to despair and discontentment, though we find by St. Paul, that it leadeth to Christ. To preach the law alone by itself, we confess, is to pervert the use of it; neither have we any power or commission so to do, for we have *our power for edification, and not for destruction*. It was published as an appendant to the Gospel, and so must it be preached. It was published *in the hand of a Mediator*, and must be preached in the hand of a Mediator. It was published *evangelically*, and it must be so preached. But yet we must preach the law, and that in its own fearful shapes; for, though it was published in mercy, it was published in thunder, fire, tempests, and darkness, even in the hand of a Mediator; for this is the method of the Holy Ghost, to convince first of sin, and then to reveal righteousness and refuge in Christ. The law is the forerunner, that makes room and prepares welcome in the soul for Christ.

BP. REYNOLDS.

We can have no Scriptural Hopes without the Knowledge of the Law.

I COME now to show, that without the knowledge of the Law we can have *no Scriptural hopes*. The *faith* which alone justifies the soul, is that which brings us simply to the Lord Jesus Christ as our only hope and refuge. If we attempt, in

any measure or degree, to blend with his merits any thing of our own, we make void all that he has done and suffered for us : *Christ himself is from that moment becomes of no effect unto us.* As far as respects us, *his death is in vain.* But who will exercise this faith ? Who will condescend to accept salvation on such terms ? Who will bear to renounce his good works in point of dependence on them, and to enter into heaven at the same gate with publicans and harlots ? All this is too humiliating for our proud hearts : we will not endure it : we will have something of our own, whereof to boast. If we make not our own works the sole ground of our justification, we will rely on them in part : or, if we be brought to rely solely on the merits of Christ, and to seek salvation by faith alone, we will make our own goodness a warrant for believing in him. We cannot, we will not, suffer ourselves to be stript of all self-preference : we will not glory solely in the cross of Christ. And wherefore is all this reluctance to comply with the terms of the Gospel ? It proceeds from our ignorance of the law. We see not, that our very best deeds stand in need of mercy, as much as our vilest sins. We see not, that the smallest defect entails a curse upon us, as truly as our most enormous transgression. When these things are clearly seen, all the difficulty vanishes ; and we are contented to be saved altogether by grace. But till we have obtained this knowledge of the law, nothing under heaven can prevail upon us to exercise faith with becoming simplicity.

As to *an entire devotedness of heart to God*, as his redeemed people, we shall be equally defective in that also. We shall be contented with a low standard of obedience, and never aspire after a perfect conformity to the divine image. *To walk altogether as Christ walked*, will appear a bondage. To tread in the steps of the holy apostles, will be regarded as being *righteous over-much*. To glory in the cross for Christ's sake, and to *rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer shame and death for him*, will be thought fit only for apostles, and a culpable excess in us. *But nothing less than this will prove us sincere : nothing less than this will be an acceptable sacrifice unto the Lord.* If we would be really Christ's, we must *live not unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again ; purifying ourselves, even as he is pure ; and being perfect, even*

as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. This, let it be remembered, is inseparable from a Scriptural hope : and, inasmuch as nothing but a Scriptural hope can constrain us to it, and nothing but the grace of Christ effect it in us, we must remain destitute of it : our ignorance of the law will keep us from Christ ; and our want of union with Christ will keep us far lower in our attainments than the Gospel requires, and, consequently, destitute of the hope which the Gospel only can inspire.

REV. C. SIMEON.

We shall all be of one Mind regarding the Law and the Gospel in the next World.

LABOR for such thoughts of the law of God, and of the righteousness of Christ, and of the grace of God, as you will have when you come to die. Dying thoughts are commonly the truest. When a man is launching into eternity, when the man hath, as it were, put one foot off from the shore of time, and is leaving this world—what a poor mean thing is this little cottage of self-righteousness ? It is as nothing in the man's eyes ; but that great palace of the righteousness of Christ, and the great tenor of free grace, in bestowing it on the unworthy—what a glorious thing doth it appear to be ? Dying people do not use to brag of their lives, and their great attainments : *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*, saith dying Stephen, Acts vii. 59. *Although my house be not so with God*, saith dying David, *yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure : this is all my salvation, and all my desire*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Labor to have such thoughts of these things as all men will have, both good and bad, at the great day of judgment. The world will once be all of a mind, that is questionless ; in the main things all believers are of one mind now : and in the main things all unbelievers are in one mind ; and unbelievers reckon Christ crucified weakness and foolishness : and all believers reckon him the wisdom and the power of God : but when the last day comes, they will be all of one mind exactly, they on the right hand, and they on the left hand too. If this question were to go round to all the miserable assembly at the Judge's left hand, What think you of the law of God ? — ' Oh ! it is a holy, powerful, dreadful law,' would they say. ' We lie under it for evermore, and feel the lashes of it.' What think you of the righteousness of

Christ? 'It is a safe garment, happy they that are clothed with it; we have refused it, and therefore we are destroyed.' The despised grace of God is there precious to them: we use to say, 'Truth is the daughter of time:' if I may reflect upon the words, 'Truth is the daughter of eternity;' and this day of eternity will bring forth truth to all men, as to these three points:—the holiness of the law of God—the virtue of the righteousness of Christ—and, the dominion of the grace of God. These are points that all the damned in hell, and all the glorified in heaven, will eternally have the same sentiments of; but with wonderful difference as to their share therein. The damned hear nothing but the curse of the law: but it is the happiness of the glorified in being delivered from it. *That as sin hath reigned unto death, so grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*, Rom. v. 21. The words just going before are, *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*, ver. 20. There are two great things that have filled this world:—there were but two men in it that are worth talking of—the first Adam and the second; and if you know these well, it is no great matter what you are ignorant of. The first Adam is the law; the second Adam is the Gospel: to the former belongs hell; and to the latter heaven. Now, these two great men brought in two great things:—the first man brought in that woful thing we call sin; and the second man brought in that brave thing we call grace; and both these are great principles: sin reigns, and all that it reigns over, it destroys; it reigns unto death: and grace reigns, and all it reigns over, it saves; *Grace reigns unto eternal life, through righteousness, by Jesus Christ our Lord*.

REV. R. TRAILL.

The Law not lowered in its demands in consequence of Man's Depravity.

SOME suppose the difficulty would be removed if it might be allowed that Christ by his death procured or engaged the Father's love to sinners, so far as to obtain a *relaxation* of that law under which they originally were, and establish a milder system of government suited to the condition of his rebellious subjects. But this plea is quite inadmissible, because the love of God, from which salvation springs, was

the *cause* of Christ's coming to die for transgressors. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*, John iii. 16. *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, that God sent his Son into the world that we might live through him*, John iv. 9. *Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us*, chap. iii. 16. Christ did not procure a new remedial law, because that law under which sinners *are*, requires perfect obedience, on pain of perpetual punishment. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them, and as many as are of the works of the law are under its curse*, Gal. iii. 10. The law under which sinners are, is that according to which the world stands condemned as criminal at Jehovah's bar, and *by the deeds of which no flesh shall be justified in his sight*, Rom. iii. 19, 20. Those who think a relaxation of the law is obtained, ought to point out wherein the *abatement* consisteth, that men might keep in a happy medium, and not presume to go *beyond* nor *fall short* in obedience to its precepts. Will the Lord indeed allow men to have other gods besides himself, or to worship him in a way contrary to what he has appointed? Will he hold them guiltless that take his name in vain? May people now lawfully forget to keep holy the Sabbath day? Has Christ released men from their natural obligations to parents? or given them a license to murder, to live in uncleanness, and falsely to accuse their neighbors, or covet what is the property of others? If moral commands continue in full force, as is abundantly evident from the New Testament, wherein then does the alteration consist? Does the law cease to take cognisance of the heart, and being *less spiritual*, is it therefore *more agreeable* to the carnal mind? If that be the case, how can *mental* acts be condemned by it? which the Scriptures *positively* declare they are. Impure desires are by it deemed adultery; hatred, murder; and covetousness, idolatry; see Matt. v. 28; 2 Pet. ii. 14; 1 John iii. 15; Col. iii. 5: The language of Christians in the apostolic day was, *We know the law is spiritual*, Rom. vii. 14. *It is holy, just, and good*, verse 12. *I delight in it after the inward man*, says Paul, verse 22. *So then with my mind I serve the law of God*, verse 25. The Law of which the apostle spoke, and in which

he delighted, was that which slew him ; that commandment which was ordained to life, (but as a criminal,) he found to be unto death ; verse 10, 11. He was delivered from it as a covenant, but under it as an unalterable law, verse 6, 7 ; as a covenant it became weak (that it could not give life to the sinner) ; not weak in its own nature, much less wicked, but weak through the flesh. What it could not therefore do in favor of the guilty, was done by Jesus, who did not blame the Law, but justified and satisfied its demands, and condemned all opposition to it, even *sin in the flesh* Rom. viii. 3. The law under which Christians are, requires truth in the inward parts as much as ever, and cannot alter whilst Jehovah remains the same : for *God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth*, John ii. 24. If then both the *matter* and *spiritual nature* of moral obedience remain the same, notwithstanding man's inability, it is evident the law by which obedience is enforced is not *altered*, and that a new remedial law is a *fiction*. Besides, if the law became unrighteous when its subjects became ungodly, (which would be blasphemy to suppose,) God would certainly have repealed it, and not sent his Son to honor an unjust law, at the expense of his blood. Finally, If the divine law ceaseth to require perfect obedience, saints will at last rise in obedience superior to the law under which they are ; for *the spirits of just men will be made perfect*, and when so, they will love God more than he desires they should, unless the Law *rise* and *fall* in its requirements according to the *inclinations* of its subjects, on which absurd hypothesis the notion of a *new* Law seems to be founded. The Gospel exhibits *new motives* to love and obedience, and graciously conveys *new principles*, in consequence of which saints yield to God *new obedience*, and by his authority attend to *new positive ordinances*, for new and special purposes ; and are accepted of God, and approach him under *new characters*, in a *new and living way* ; and are encouraged by *new and better* promises, in consequence of the *new and well-ordered covenant* of grace, under which they are. But though he make *all things new* in respect of acceptance with him, and enjoyment of him, and *old things* pass away in favor of them who inhabit the new Jerusalem, yet as

God is the same, without variableness, in his own adorable perfections, infinite beauty, and boundless authority, he cannot therefore alter his moral law, considered simply as a law, without giving up his claim to Deity, because moral obligations arise from that natural connexion and relation subsisting between God and rational creatures, considered as the productions of his power. Hence it is that no alteration in them can possibly diminish their obligations to him.

REV. R. HALL.

There has not, for these thousand years, been started a more mischievous, pestilential notion, than that God does not demand a perfect fulfilling of all his laws. This is directly to contradict Jesus Christ. God never alters his perfect law ; though, he pardons us when we break it. Observe, however, he does not pardon those who are asleep, but those who labor, those who fear, and who say with Job, *I know thou wilt not hold me innocent*. Never suppose that God does not require an exact regard to every tittle of his law ; such a notion will soon engender pride, and make you despise that grace, through which his holy law, as a schoolmaster, should compel you to seek deliverance.

LUTHER.

The true *Gospel doctrines* are always according to *godliness*, or the real Gospel promotes vital holiness in the souls of men to the very uttermost. No principle can come from God, which gives the least countenance to sin, or favors lust in the soul ; or which supposes, that a *lower* degree of obedience is required of us now, because of our incapacity to yield a perfect and sinless obedience through our deep and horrid depravity which is within us.

To accommodate the law to our present weakness in its precepts, is the worst kind (Dr. Owen) of antinomianism ; and to affirm, that we are not under the law, as a rule of action, is downright rebellion and insolence against God : it is such abandoned and scandalous licentiousness as ought to be abhorred by every true believer in the church of God. To suppose we are not under the law, as a rule of *action* to Christ our King, and a rule of *gratitude* to Christ our Redeemer ; I say, such a supposition necessarily implies,

that no acts are unlawful, or sinful; for, *where no law is, there is no transgression*. We are not freed from the law, as a rule of conduct, nor is any abatement made in its preceptive part; no, not in the least. Neither does the Divine Lawgiver make any allowances for our defects or imperfections, and what are sometimes called our unallowed and involuntary sins. Nor does he *justify* our persons on the ground of a *partial obedience* to his just and holy law. This would be to conceal, or deny, or misrepresent the true character of God, and be an everlasting dishonor to his justice, holiness, majesty, and eternal dominion over all.

We ought, therefore, strictly to examine every doctrine by this rule; and not, for one moment, advance any principle in religion, which is inconsistent with the purity, perfection, and extensive commands of the law. For God cannot abate; he never will abate of the strictness of his precepts, in order to save sinners; nor will he ever justify their persons without a *righteousness*, a divine and infinite *righteousness*, which is absolutely and eternally answerable to his precepts, in their utmost purity and extent. As we must not dare to corrupt the glorious doctrines of the Gospel; so we must and will resolutely maintain the doctrine of the law in its purity, perfection, and dignity, whilst life, and thought, and immortality endure.

DR. RYLAND.

The Law admits not of sincere but imperfect obedience.

THE law of God is infinitely spiritual, and obligeth us not only to the performance of the external duties of obedience, but requires also the absolute perfection of the inward dispositions; not only that our love of God be sincere and cordial, but that it must be intense and perfect to the highest degree; thus, Deut. vi. 5. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*. The Law and covenant of works exact a perfection of degrees in our love and obedience, as well as of parts: it must not only be sincere, but complete; it not only tries our obedience by the touchstone, but weighs it in the balance, and gives us no grains of allowance. Now, is there any man upon earth that so loves God, or obeys him, that it is not possible he should love him more, or obey him

better? Do not some Christians exceed others in their grace and holiness? And might not all exceed themselves if they would? The Law gives no allowance for any failings. And therefore if thou canst love God more, and serve him better than thou dost, thou art not a fulfiller of the law, but a transgressor of it. Hence, St. Austin, in his Confessions, hath a pious meditation, 'Woe to our commendable life, if thou, Lord, setting thy mercy aside, shouldst examine it according to the strict rules of justice, and the Law.'

BP. HOPKINS.

A great reason, why man's miserable state by Nature, and the way of recovery by Grace are not understood, is, because it is too commonly supposed, that there is a covenant of sincere though imperfect obedience, through which men are to be saved by doing what, with a vague confusion of ideas, is usually called the best;—and that Christ is to make out the rest for them. So long as this pestilent notion prevails in the mind, I absolutely despair of any good being done. It is hard to say whether it is most affronting to the PURITY or to the MERCY of God: for it quite obscures both. Here is neither Law nor Gospel; neither the covenant of Works nor the covenant of Grace, but a vain attempt to mix them together. I would beseech those who still hold fast this notion, to pray earnestly for divine wisdom, and seriously to search the Scriptures. Let them not take it positively for granted, without examination, that WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UP IN MUST BE RIGHT. There have been those who were as positive as you, who yet through Grace, have been made to see their error. Sure enough a true conviction of sin, and some real measure of self-knowledge once attained, will demolish all this scheme, which, indeed, has not a shadow of a foundation in Scripture.

There never were but two covenants; the first of Works, which requires perfect obedience: it was made with us all by nature in Adam. The second covenant is the covenant of Grace, which says, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*; and which effectually comprehends all who fly for refuge to it. In both cases, God sees such an union between the representative and the represented, between Adam and his natural posterity, between Christ and his spiritual

seed, that he views it right to impute death and destruction on the first account, and eternal life on the second. And it is utterly unreasonable for any man to say, that such a procedure is UNRIGHTEOUS, when the infinite God, who alone must be a proper judge of the nature of both these unions, declares it to be RIGHTEOUS. Let any man examine the 3d, 5th, and 10th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, where the two covenants are plainly set forth, and not even the possibility of any middle covenant is allowed. So that, under one or the other of these two covenants, we all are, and shall be found at the last day: and, let any man take care how he fancy to himself a middle rule by which God should try him, when, in reality, no such rule exists. These then are the circumstances of mankind. These are the considerations with which every man must begin, who would understand what Christianity is to do for him. He is guilty and condemned: he is evil and corrupt altogether, having lost both the favor and the image of God: what a death must that be?—to live without God, and to have God for his enemy. REV. JOS. MILNER.

They (the Arminians,) strenuously maintain, that it would be unjust in God to require any thing of us beyond our present power and ability to perform; and also hold, that we are now unable to perform perfect obedience, and that Christ died to satisfy for the imperfections of our obedience, and has made way that our imperfect obedience might be accepted instead of perfect; wherein they seem insensibly to run themselves into the grossest inconsistency. For they hold—That God, in mercy to mankind, has abolished that rigorous constitution, or law, that they were under originally; and, instead of it, has introduced a more mild constitution, and put us under a new law, which requires no more than imperfect obedience, in compliance with our poor, infirm, impotent circumstances since the fall.

Now, how can these things be made consistent? I would ask, What law these imperfections of our obedience are a breach of? If they are a breach of no law that we were ever under, then they are not sins. And if they be not sins, what need of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? But if they are sins, and the breach of some law, what law is it? They cannot be a

breach of their new law; for (according to their principles) that requires no other than imperfect obedience, or obedience with imperfections; and, therefore, to have obedience attended with imperfections, is no breach of it; for, it is as much as it requires. And they cannot be a breach of their old law; for that, they say, is entirely abolished, and we never were under it. They say, it would not be just in God to require of us perfect obedience, because it would not be just to require more than we can perform, or to punish us for failing of it. And, therefore, by their own scheme, the imperfections of our obedience do not deserve to be punished. What need, therefore, of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? What need of his suffering, to satisfy for that which is no fault, and, in its own nature, deserves no suffering? What need of Christ's dying to purchase that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, when, according to their scheme, it would be unjust in itself, that any other obedience than imperfect, should be required? What need of Christ's dying to make way for God's accepting such an obedience, as it would be unjust in him not to accept? Is there any need of Christ's dying to prevail with God not to do unrighteously? If it be said—That Christ died to satisfy that old law for us, that so we might not be under it, but that there might be room for our being under a milder law; still I would inquire, What need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law, which, by their principles, it would be in itself unjust that we should be under, whether Christ had died or no, because, in our present state, we are not able to keep it?

So the Arminians are inconsistent with themselves, not only in what they say of Christ's satisfaction to atone for those imperfections which we cannot avoid; but also in what they say of the grace of God, granted to enable men to perform the sincere obedience of the new law. They grant—That by reason of original sin, we are utterly disabled for the performance of the condition, without new grace from God. But they affirm—That He gives such grace to all, by which the performance of the condition is truly possible. And upon this ground, He may, and doth most justly require it. If they intend to speak properly, by grace they must mean, that assistance which is of grace, or of free favor

and kindness. But yet they speak of it as very unreasonable, unjust, and cruel, for God to require that as the condition of pardon, that is become impossible by original sin. If it be so, what grace is there in giving assistance and ability to perform the condition of pardon? Or why is that called by the name of grace, that is an absolute debt, which God is bound to bestow, and which it would be unjust and cruel in Him to withhold, seeing He requires that as the condition of pardon, which we cannot perform without it?

PRES. EDWARDS.

Reply to those who impugn the Equity and Wisdom of God, for commanding that which we are unable to perform.

BUT what! are then the laws of God impossible to be fulfilled? Is it not our imputation to the equity and wisdom of God that he should command that which we are not able to perform?

I answer, 1st, The laws of God are in themselves possible as well as just; and there is nothing which he now requires of us which he did not endow us with strength in our creation to perform.

2dly, In this our fallen and corrupted estate our perfect obedience is become impossible; not because the law is more strict and rigorous, but because we are grown weaker and more averse.

3dly, It is no injustice in God to require what is impossible for us to perform, when that impossibility riseth from our own default. It is not God, but ourselves, who have made the observation of his laws impossible. And although we have wasted our stock, and are become bankrupts, yet he may righteously exact from us the debt of obedience which we owe him.

4thly, Although a perfect and consummate obedience be now impossible, yet an inchoate and sincere obedience is possible through the assistance of divine grace. And certainly that law which commands absolute perfection from us, requires us to endeavour after the highest degree that is attainable. So that these commands which exceed our present power are neither vain nor unjust: for they engage us to exert our strength to the utmost, whereby we shall certainly attain unto a far greater perfection in our obedience, than if we were enjoined that which were easy, or merely possible to perform; and such is the disingenuity of our temper, that as

much as the law were relaxed of its severity, so much proportionably we also should remit of our industry: and therefore since our sloth will take allowances to itself, it is far more expedient for us that God hath commanded from us things beyond the sphere of our present ability, than if he had commanded what was within it. For I much doubt whether if God did not command us to do more than we can, we should do as much as we do.

But you will say, to require more than is possible for us to perform may rather seem a discouragement than an excitement to our endeavours. For what natural man will attempt that which he knows to be impossible?

To this I answer, first, That there is a twofold impossibility; one that consists in the nature of the thing propounded unto us, another that consists only in an eminent and superlative degree of it. The first sort of impossibility, which consists in the nature of the thing itself, doth utterly forbid all attempts and endeavours. Never any wise man attempted to climb up into the sun, or to metamorphose himself into an angel, because the thing itself in all considerable degrees of it is impossible. But where the impossibility consists only in some eminent degree, and yet every degree that is attainable by us hath excellency enough in itself to invite and engage our endeavours, there the impossibility of the highest degree is no discouragement to a wise and rational man from attempting to do his uttermost. So it is in this case, many degrees of holiness and obedience are attainable by us, and every degree that we can attain unto is infinitely worth our pains and labor; and therefore though absolute perfection in it be impossible, yet this can be no discouragement from using our utmost endeavours. The more we strive after it, the more we shall still attain; and what we do attain is an abundant recompense of our industry, and carries in it so much excellency as will quicken and excite us unto farther improvements. And certainly whilst we endeavour toward unattainable perfection we shall attain unto much more than if we set our mark shorter; as he that aims at a star is likely to shoot much higher than he that aims only at a turf.

Secordly, As we must distinguish of impossibility, so likewise of perfection, which is either legal or evangelical.

First, There is a legal perfection, to which two things are necessarily required.

1st, Freedom from original sin, that there be no taint derived down upon our natures, no corruption inherent in us, that should incline us unto evil : for where original sin is, there legal righteousness and perfection cannot possibly be, for even this sin is a violation of the law.

2dly, There must be a perfect and exact actual fulfilling of all the laws of God, without failing in the least circumstance or least tittle of observation ; for legal perfection cannot possibly consist with the least guilt.

Secondly, There is an evangelical perfection, which is a state, though not of innocency, yet of such a personal righteousness and holiness as shall be accepted and rewarded by God. Now this evangelical perfection consists in three things :

1st, In true and sincere repentance for our past offences, begging pardon at God's hands, and endeavouring to abstain from the commission of the like for the future.

2dly, In a true and lively faith, whereby we rely upon the merits and satisfaction of Christ alone for the remission of our sins.

3dly, In new and sincere obedience, endeavouring to live more holily, and to walk more strictly and perfectly before God, according to the rules he hath prescribed us in his holy laws. And this consists both in the mortification of the corrupt and sinful desires of the flesh, and in the daily quickening and renewing of the Spirit, whereby we grow in grace, and make farther progress in Christianity : when we do all this in the truth and sincerity of our souls, we are said to be perfect with an evangelical or Gospel perfection ; and this indeed is all the inherent perfection and righteousness that is attainable by us in this life. Thus it is that the saints are in Scripture termed righteous. So Noah is called righteous, Gen. vii. 1. And Abraham pleads with God for the righteous in Sodom, Gen. xviii. 23, 24. And Zachary and Elizabeth have this testimony, that *they were both righteous, walking in all the commandments of God blameless*, Luke i. 6. Thus we have the ways of holiness called ways of righteousness, Psal. xxiii. 3. and the works of holiness, works of righteousness, Psal. xv. 2. Isa. lxiv. 2. &c. This evangelical perfection is attainable in this life, and indeed is attained by every sincere

and upright Christian.

BP. HOPKINS.

The meaning of being under Grace, and not under the Law.

THIS thing (I mean to tame the body and so forth) we are able to do, saith St. Paul, *seeing we are under grace, and not under the law* : what it is not to be under the law, he himself expoundeth. For not to be under the law, is not so to be understood, that every man may do what him lusteth. But not to be under the law, is to have a free heart renewed with the Spirit, so that thou hast lust inwardly of thine own accord, to do that which the law commandeth, without compulsion, yea, though there were no law. For grace, that is to say, God's favor, bringeth us the Spirit, and maketh us love the law, so is there now no more sin, neither is the law now any more against us, but at one, and agreed with us, and we with it. But to be under the law, is to deal with the works of the law, and to work without the Spirit and grace, for so long, no doubt, sin reigneth in us through the law, that is to say, the law declareth that we are under sin, and that sin hath power and dominion over us, seeing we cannot fulfil the law, namely, within the heart, forasmuch as no man of nature favoreth the law, consenteth thereunto, and delighteth therein, which thing is exceeding great sin, that we cannot consent to the law, which law is nothing else save the will of God.

W. TINDAL, (Martyr.)

Works of Supererogation.

THERE are two points to be considered, 1st. Whether there are in the New Testament counsels of perfection given ; that is to say, such rules which do not oblige all men to follow them, under the pain of sin, Luke xvii. 10. ; but yet are useful to carry them on to a sublimer degree of perfection than is necessary in order to their salvation. 2d. Whether men by following these do not more than they are bound to do, and by consequence, whether they have not thereby a stock of merit to communicate to others. The first of these leads to the second ; for if there are no such counsels, then the foundation of Supererogation fails.

We deny both upon this ground, that

the great obligations of *loving God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, and our neighbour as ourselves*, which are reckoned by our Saviour *the two great commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets*, are of that extent, that it seems not possible to imagine how any thing can be acceptable to God that does not fall within them. Since if it is acceptable to God, then that obligation to love God so entirely must bind us to it; for if it is a sin not to love God up to this pitch, then it is a sin not to do every thing that we imagine will please him: and by consequence, if there is a degree of pleasing God, whether precept or counsel, that we do not study to attain to, we do not love him in a manner suitable to that. It seems a great many in the church of Rome are aware of this consequence, and therefore they have taken much pains to convince the world that we are not bound to love God at all; or, as others more cautiously word it, that we are only bound to value him above all things, but not to have a love of such a vast intension for him. This is a proposition that after all their softening it, gives so much horror to every Christian, that I need not be at any pains to confute it.

We are farther required in the New Testament, *to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1: and to reckon ourselves *his and not our own*; and that *we are bought with a price*; and that therefore *we ought to glorify him both in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are his*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. These and many more like expressions are plainly precepts of general obligation, for nothing can be set forth in more positive words than these are: and it is not easy to imagine how any thing can go beyond them; for if we are Christ's property, purchased by him, then we ought to apply ourselves to every thing in which his honor, or the honor of his religion can be concerned, or which will be pleasing to him.

Our Saviour having charged the Pharisees so often, for adding so many of their ordinances to the laws of God, *teaching his fear by the precepts of men*, and the apostles condemning *a shew of will-worship and voluntary humility*, Col. ii. 23, seem to belong to this matter, and to be designed on purpose to repress the pride and singularities of affected hypocrites. Our Saviour

said to him that asked, *What he should do that he might have eternal life? Keep the Commandments*, Matth. xix. 16, 17. These words I do rather cite, because they are followed with a passage, that of all others in the New Testament, seems to look the likeliest a counsel of perfection; for when he who made the question, replied upon our Saviour's answer, *That he had kept all these from his youth up*, and added, *what lack I yet?* To that our Saviour answered, *If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven, and come and follow me*: Matt. xix. 20, 21. And by the words that follow, of the difficulty of a *rich man's entering into the kingdom of Heaven*; this is more fully explained. The meaning of all that whole passage is this: Christ called that person to abandon all, and come and follow him, in such a manner as he had called his apostles. So that here is no counsel but a positive command given to that particular person, upon this occasion. By perfect is only to be meant complete, in order to that to which he pretended, which was eternal life. And that also explains the word in that period, *treasures in Heaven*, another expression for eternal life, to compensate the loss which he would have made by the sale of his possessions. So that here is no counsel, but a special command given to this person, in order to his own attaining eternal life.

Nor is it to be inferred from hence that this is proposed to others in the way of a counsel; for as in cases either of a famine or persecution, it may come to be to some a command, to sell all in order to the relief of others, as it was in the first beginnings of Christianity; so in ordinary cases to do it, might be rather a tempting of Providence than a trusting to it, for then a man should part with the means of his subsistence, which God has provided for him, without a necessary and pressing occasion. Therefore our Saviour's words, *Sell that ye have and give alms*, Luke xii. 33, as they are delivered in the strain and peremptoriness of a command, so they must be understood to bind as positive commands do: not so constantly as a negative command does, since in every minute of our life that binds: but there is a rule and order in our obeying positive commands. We must not rest on the Sabbath-day, if a work of necessity or

charity calls us to put to our hands: we must not obey our parents in disobeying a public law: so if we have families, or the necessities of a feeble body, and a weak constitution, for which God hath supplied us with that which will afford us *food convenient for us*, we must not throw up those provisions, and cast ourselves upon others. Therefore that precept must be moderated and expounded, so as to agree with the other rules and orders that God has set us.

A distinction is therefore to be made between those things that do universally and equally bind all mankind; and those things that do more specially bind some sorts of men, and that only at some times. There are greater degrees of charity, gravity, and all other virtues to which the clergy for instance are more bound than other men; but these are to them precepts and not counsels. And in the first beginnings of Christianity there were greater obligations laid upon all Christians, as well as greater gifts were bestowed on them. It is true, in the point of marriage St. Paul does plainly allow, that such as *marry do well, but that such as marry not do better*, 1 Cor. vii. 38. But the meaning of that is not, as if an unmarried life were a state of perfection, beyond that which a man is obliged to: but only this, that as to the course of this life, and the present distress, and as to the judgment that is to be made of men by their actions, no man is to be thought to do amiss who marries; but yet he who marries not, is to be judged to do better. But yet inwardly and before God this matter may be far otherwise; for he who marries not and burns, certainly does worse than he who marries and lives chastely. But he who finding that he can limit himself without endangering his purity; though no law restrains him from marrying, yet seeing that he is like to be tempted to be too careful about the concerns of this life if he marries, is certainly under obligations to follow that course of life in which there are fewer temptations, and greater opportunities to attend on the service of God.

With relation to outward actions, and to the judgments that from visible appearances are to be made of them, some actions may be said to be better than others, which yet are truly good: but as to the particular obligations that every man is

under, with relation to his own state and circumstances, and for which he must answer at the last day, these being secret, and so not subject to the judgments of men, certainly every man is strictly bound to do the best he can: to choose that course of life in which he thinks he may do the best services to God and man: nor are these free to him to choose or not: he is under obligations, and he sins if he sees a more excellent thing that he might have done, and contents himself with a lower or less valuable thing. St. Paul had wherein to glory; for whereas it was lawful for him as an apostle to suffer the Corinthians to supply him in temporals, when he was serving them in spiritual things; yet he chose rather for the honor of the gospel, and to take away all occasion of censure from those who sought for it, *to work with his own hands, and not to be burdensome to them*. But in that state of things, though there was no law or outward obligation upon him to spare them, he was under an inward law of doing all things to the glory of God: and by this law he was as much bound, as if there had been an outward compulsory law lying upon him.

This distinction is to be remembered, between such an obligation as arises out of a man's particular circumstances, and such other motives as can be only known to a man himself, and such an obligation as may be fastened on him by stated and general rules: he may be absolutely free from the latter of these, and yet be secretly bound by those inward and stronger constraints of the love of God, and of zeal for his glory. Enough seems to be said to prove that there are no counsels of perfection in the Gospel: that all the rules set to us in it are in the style and form of precepts; and that though there may be some actions of more heroical virtue, and more sublime piety than others, to which all men are not obliged by equal or general rules; yet such men to whose circumstances and station they do belong, are strictly obliged by them, so that they should sin if they did not put them in practice.

This being thus made out, the foundation of works of supererogation is destroyed. But if it should be acknowledged that there were such counsels of perfection in the Scripture, there are still two other clear proofs, to shew that there can be no

such thing as supererogating with God. First, every man not only has sinned, but has still so much corruption about him, as to feel the truth of that of St. James, *in many things we offend all*. Now, unless it can be supposed that by obeying those counsels, a man can compensate with Almighty God for his sins, there is no ground to think that he can supererogate: he must first clear his own score, before he can imagine that any thing upon his account can be forgiven or imputed to another: and if the guilt of sin is eternal, and the pretended merit of obeying counsels is only temporary, no temporary merit can take off an eternal guilt. So that it must first be supposed, that a man both is, and has been perfect as to the precepts of obligation, before it can be thought that he should have an overplus of merit.

The other clear argument from Scripture against works of supererogation is, that there is nothing in the whole New Testament that does in any sort favor them: we are always taught to trust to the mercies of God and to the death and intercession of Christ, and *to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12; but we are never once directed to look for any help from saints, or to think that we can do any thing for another man's soul in this way. The Psalm has it, *No man can by any means give a ransom for his brother's soul*: the words of Christ, Luke xvii. 10, are full and express against it.

The words in the parable of the five foolish virgins and the five wise, may seem to favor it, but they really contradict it; for it was the foolish virgins that desired the wise to give them of their oil; which, if any will apply to a supposed communication of merit, they ought to consider that the proposition is made by the foolish, and the answer of the wise virgins is full against it, *Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you*, Mat. xxv. 9: what follows, of bidding them *go to them that sell, and buy for themselves*, is only a piece of the fiction of the parable, which cannot enter into any part of the application of it. What St. Paul says of his *filling up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church*, Col. i. 24, is, as ap-

pears by the words that follow, *whereof I am made a minister*, only applicable to the edification that the church received from the sufferings of the apostles: it being a great confirmation to them of the truth of the gospel, when those who preached it suffered so constantly and so patiently for it; by which they both confirmed what they had preached, and set an example to others, of adhering firmly to it. And since Christ is related to his church, as a head to the members, it is in some sort his suffering himself, when his members suffer; and that conformity which they ought to express to him as their head, was necessary to make up the due proportion that ought to be between the head and the members. So St. Paul rejoiced in his being made *conformable to him*: and this, as it is a sense that the words will well bear, so it is certain they are capable of no other sense; for if the sufferings of the apostles were meritorious in behalf of the other Christians, some plain account must have been given of this in the New Testament, at least to do honor to the memory of such apostles as had then died for the faith. If it is suggested, that the living apostles were too modest to claim it to themselves; that it will not satisfy; all runs quite in a contrary style; the mercies of God, and the blood of Christ being always repeated, whereas these are never once named. Now to imagine that there can be any thing of such great use to us, in which the Scripture should be not only silent, but should run in a strain totally different from it, is not conceivable: for if in any thing, the gospel ought to be full and explicit in all that which concerns our peace and reconciliation with God, and the means of our escaping his wrath, and obtaining his favor.

BP. BURNET.

This is not a human notion, but an absolute sarcasm of the devil, mocking and deriding the blindness into which he has betrayed us; that, when God has published his law, to shew for what perfection man was created, and into what ruin he has fallen, the devil should put such an irony upon us, as to persuade us that now, in our present ruined state, we can even go beyond that law! MELANCTHON.

SECTION VIII.—ON REGENERATION AND CONVERSION.

What Regeneration is not, and what it is.

To be born again, or new-born, is not to have any essential change to pass upon the essential parts of human nature; the essential parts of human nature I call the soul and body, which remain the same for substance after Regeneration, as they were before. Indeed Flagicus Illiricus, that held original sin to be the substance of the soul, was driven by force of consequence also to affirm, that regeneration made a change in the substance and essential of the soul. And the Familists of late have entertained strange and blasphemous conceits concerning Regeneration, as if it were a metamorphosis of the creature into the very being and nature of God, making that change that is wrought, thereby to be not so much a new creature, as a deity. But these are wild and uncouth fancies; for if regeneration wrought any such change upon man, as that he is not now the same person regenerated, as he was unregenerated; how doth the apostle say, *I was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious?* 1 Tim. i. 13. Then also grace, instead of converting, destroyed the sinner, and consequently no sinner yet was or shall be saved. But enough of this: grace therefore makes no such physical change upon the natural being or essence of man, but the understanding, will, and affections, are the same for nature and essence in the regenerate as in the unregenerate, but only they are rectified and endowed with infused habits.

Secondly, Regeneration is not a conversion from an idolatrous and an erroneous way of worship, to the profession and acknowledgment of the true faith; much less then is it not a conversion from one sect and party of Christians to another, as many ignorant persons suppose, that when they are won over from one truth, it may be to an error, presently they think they are converted by it, because they join in with another party of Christians. But there may be proselytes gained over to the church, either from heathenism, or from popish idolatry, whose souls notwithstanding may never be gained over unto Christ. As travellers that come into a foreign land still remain subjects to their natural lord, so these may come into the church, which is the kingdom of Christ upon earth, and

yet still remain slaves to their natural lord the devil. Indeed I find in Scripture, that when Christ and his apostles labored to convert the Jews or others unto the profession and acknowledgment of Christ, and to bring them to a thorough work of regeneration, the chiefest thing that they insisted on, was to persuade them to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Why, now, though this dogmatical faith is not regeneration, yet it was then almost an infallible test of it; and to persuade them to believe that Jesus was the Christ, was to prevail upon them to be truly and really converted; it was seldom seen among those primitive Christians, where there was no carnal respects, or outward advantage that could commend the gospel to the secular interests of men; when the only reward of professing of Christ, was reproaches, persecution, and martyrdom: seldom was it seen that any were won over from heathenism or Judaism, to make profession of the despised name of Christ, but such who were inwardly renewed by that almighty grace, that can conquer all the despites and affronts of the world. Few were so foolish as to profess Christ in hypocrisy, when that hypocrisy would endanger their own lives; and yet because it was but in hypocrisy, it could gain them no benefit by his death. Therefore it is that the Scripture speaks of those that made a profession of the name of Christ, as if they were regenerated, because it was then almost an infallible mark of it. Thus you have it in 1 John iv. 15, *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* So again in chap. v., *He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* But now when the very name of a Christian is become a title of honor, and the same punishments do now attend the denying of Christ, that then attended the acknowledgment of him; men may indeed be called by his name, that never were effectually called by his grace, and may make a profession of the true faith, and yet remain Christian infidels.

Thirdly, The reformation of a dissolute and debauched life falls short of this spiritual new birth. This is that with which many do soothe up themselves, when they reflect back upon the wild extravagances of their former times; how out-

rageously wicked they were; drunkards, unclean, riotous, blasphemers, swearers, and the very worst of sinners; and now they find themselves deadened to these things, and they are grown men of stayed and sober lives and conversations, straight they conclude, that certainly such a great change as this is could never be made on them, otherwise than by a renewing work of the Spirit; and yet this amendment there may be where there is no regeneration. Men may gather up their loose and dissolute lives within the compass of civility and moral honesty, and yet they may be utter strangers to a work of true and saving grace; and this may be ascribed to two grounds; partly to the convictions of God's Spirit, awakening natural conscience to see the horror, and to foresee the danger that is in such infamous sins; and partly to prudence, that they have gained from the frequent experiences that they have had of the manifold inconveniences that they have brought upon themselves by such sins formerly. These two may make a great amendment in men's lives and conversations; and yet both these convictions and prudence fall far short of true regenerating grace. All the seeming amendment of such men's lives may be effected two ways; either by changing their sins, or by tiring out of the sinner.

First, The life may seem to be reformed, when men only change their rude and boisterous sins for such as are demure and sober. When men from riotous grow worldly; from profane and irreligious they grow superstitious and hypocritical; from atheists to be heretics; when men make this change of boisterous and roaring sins for those that are more demure and sober, they are apt to think that this change must be a change of their natures; whereas indeed it is but only a changing and bartering of their sins; and usually it is such a change too, that though it render the life more inoffensive, yet it makes the soul more incurable. St. Austin long since hath told us, That vices may give place, when yet no virtue takes it; but one vice gives place to another.

Secondly, The life may seem to be reformed, when as men are only tired out with their sins, or when men have outgrown their sins. There are sins that are proper and peculiar to such a state and season of a man's life, upon the altering of which they vanish and disappear. The

sins of youth drop off in declining age, being then incongruous. This is that which deceives many, when they look back upon these numberless vanities that they have forsaken and shaken off, and find how deadened their hearts are to those sinful ways which before they delighted in: they conclude, that certainly this great change must needs proceed from true grace; whereas, indeed, *they do not leave their sins, but their sins leave them*, and drop off from them as rotten fruit from a tree. The faculties of their souls, and the members of their bodies, that before were instruments of sin unto righteousness, are, it may be, blunted and become unserviceable: this maim of nature is far from regenerating grace, that doth not disable a man from the service of sin, but only sets him free from it.

Fourthly, To be endowed with eminent gifts, and with the common graces of the Spirit, is not to be regenerated. These may be bestowed upon the worst of men. There is grace that renders a man lovely in God's eyes, and there is grace that renders a man lovely only in men's eyes; of both these one and the same Spirit is the Author. In some the Spirit sanctifies the heart, and in others it only illuminates the head. Balaam was irradiated with the supernatural light of prophecy. Judas was dignified with the extraordinary office of the apostleship, and sent out to work miracles, together with the rest of the apostles. Yea, so much are the gifts of the Spirit the operations of the Spirit, that they are in a peculiar manner called the Holy Ghost himself: see this in Acts i. 4. Christ commands his disciples there to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father; that is, for the gifts of the Spirit, for that was the promise of the Father; and he tells them in the eighth verse, *That they should receive power after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them*. Certain it is, that they had already received the Holy Ghost in the sanctifying graces of it: we cannot think that they were in an unregenerate, unconverted estate after Christ's death; but they had not as yet received the plentiful effusion of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; of speaking with tongues, of a bold and ready utterance, of working of miracles, and the like, which were then necessary to qualify them for the successful spreading of a new doctrine. And this is more clear in Acts viii.; when Philip

had preached at Samaria, it is said he converted many, in verse 12; so that doubtless many of them had received the Spirit already in its saving graces; and yet it is said in verse 15, that the Holy Ghost was not yet fallen upon any of them; that is, though they were converted, yet they were not endowed with those wonderful gifts of the Spirit before mentioned, which afterwards they received. Now, had he been among them, and heard them speak of Christ and gospel mysteries with affections and convictions beyond natural capacities; had we heard them speak unstudied languages, and seen them working miracles, healing the sick, raising the dead, could we have thought that it was possible for any of those, who were so favored and filled by the Holy Ghost, to be yet in an unregenerate state—in a state of wrath and damnation? Yet that there might some of them be so, is clear; for the apostle speaks of the like; such who had *tasted the heavenly gift were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and yet they might fall away*, Heb. vi. 4. That is, there were them in those primitive times that had an effusion of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost poured out upon them; of speaking with tongues; of a bold and ready utterance; of working of miracles, and the like; and yet such as these, that had tasted of these heavenly gifts, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, fell away; that is, they were never truly regenerate. And certainly, if these extraordinary gifts might be found separate from true grace, much more may those inferior gifts that the Spirit now dispenseth among Christians be without true regenerating grace. A man may discourse of spiritual mysteries copiously and clearly; he may have gifts of knowledge and utterance; he may preach with evidence and demonstration, and pray with enlargement and affection, and yet notwithstanding all this, be an utter stranger to saving work of grace. Gifts prove nothing: these gifts may be but the gilding of a rotten post, the varnish of a corrupt heart. As it was a custom of old to crown those beasts' heads with garlands of flowers that were ordained to be a sacrifice; so God may sometimes crown the heads of wicked men with flowery parts and gifts, whom yet he intends to make a sacrifice of to his wrath and justice.

Fifthly, and lastly, A civil and harmless demeanour is not this state of regenera-

tion. There are many that are of a good nature, that live blamelessly as to the world, and that nearly resemble grace; such as St. Paul was, who, speaking of himself, saith, *touching the law, he was blameless*. And such was the young man in the Gospel, that came to Christ, and demanded what further lesson he should take out, having obeyed all the commands, as he thought; and yet this also is short of the regenerating grace of the Spirit, and argues only a sweet disposition, not a gracious heart.

And thus you see how easily men may mistake themselves in the great work of regeneration, upon which depends their eternal happiness; for *except a man be born again he shall never see the kingdom of God*; and yet it is too much to be feared, that many, yea, very many rest upon these things, and think the great determining change, is certainly wrought upon them only, because they are morally honest, or eminently gifted, or much reformed, or gained over to the profession of the truth with such a sect or party of professors; whereas indeed the new birth consists in none of all these things.

Briefly therefore to inform you what it is; you may take it thus:

Regeneration is a *change* of the *whole* man in *every* part and faculty thereof, *from a state of sinful nature to a state of supernatural grace*, whereby the image of God, that we defaced and lost by our first transgression, is again in some good measure restored. Now as every science hath its proper terms, that are so many keys to unlock the mysteries contained in it; so especially divinity abounds with terms that are peculiar to its own doctrine; and in no one point more than in this, of the great change that a sinner undergoes when he is translated from a state of nature to a state of grace. That grace, that concurs now unto this great change, it is of two sorts:

Either such as alters the relations wherein we stand unto God, or such as alters the dispositions and habits of our souls. Of the former sort are election, which is antecedent to our faith, and reconciliation, justification, adoption, and mystical union, which are consequents unto it: of these graces it is not my business now to treat, because they lodge only in the breast of God, and their formal effect is not a supernatural infusion of any new habits or principles, but only of new relations: when we speak of a person justified and adopted,

the true adequate notions of these terms do not declare how his heart is changed towards God; but, if I may so speak, how God's heart is changed towards him; not that he stands otherwise affected unto God, but otherwise related to God than formerly. Of a guilty malefactor he becomes acquitted and accepted by the grace of justification, and of an alien he becomes a son and heir by the grace of adoption. But then there are other graces that are inherent in us, and work a mighty change in our moral habitual principles, and whereby we also, though not so properly, are denominated gracious. God is denominated gracious by the grace of justification, adoption, mystical union, and election; and we are denominated gracious by the habitual graces that this Spirit infuseth into us, and works in us; and these are every where besparkled up and down in the Scripture, where it speaks of faith, love, patience, self-denial, meekness, knowledge, temperance, and the rest of them. These, as so many stars, ought continually to shine forth in a Christian's life; and though they may appear very differently, some obscure and cloudy, and others bright and glittering; some at one season setting, and others at another season rising; yet they all make up but one constellation, whereby we are translated, as the Scripture speaks, out of darkness into marvellous light. Now the framing of this complexion or body of grace in the heart, is that which we call Regeneration, it being a fixed constellation of all the several graces of the Spirit in the heart. The Scripture gives it divers other appellations: it is called the *new man* in Eph. iv. 24; the *new creature*, Gal. vi. 15; a *transformation into the image of God*, 2 Cor. xii. 3. 8. 18; a *participation of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4, and in other places, too long to be insisted on now, it is called *conversion*, *effectual calling*, *sanctification*, and *renovation*; and sometimes too it is termed by the name of two principal graces, the two greatest limbs of the *new man*, and they are faith and repentance, that are often put for the whole work of regeneration. All these expressions set forth the same work of grace upon the heart, though they may be understood under different notions. The *new man*, that denotes the greatness and entireness of the change. The *new creature*, that denotes that Almighty Power

whereby that entire change is wrought. The image of God and the divine nature denote that conformity that is thereby made in us to the holy will and nature of God. Effectual calling and conversion denote our returning to God after our wandering and straying from him. Sanctification denotes that influence that this great change hath set to us apart for God from common uses; for sanctification doth, in strictness of speech, signify a separation of a person or thing from profane and ordinary uses to the service and glory of God. Indeed, sanctification doth, in strictness of speech, differ from regeneration, though commonly we use them promiscuously; for regeneration is the implanting of the habits and principles of grace, but sanctification is properly the strengthening and increasing of them; it is the progress that a holy soul makes when it passeth on from one degree of grace to another. Regeneration is in nature before justification, but sanctification follows it: and hence we may observe the order in which the apostle rangeth them in that famous place; that climax in Rom. viii. 29, 30, where every grace is a round of the *scala cæli*, that Jacob's ladder, whereby we ascend into heaven: it is a place, if any in the book of God, that deserves our most serious thoughts, says the apostle; *Whom he did foreknow, them also he did predestinate*. If you ask wherein God's prescience and foreknowledge differ from predestination, a question that hath caused much strife, I answer, Prescience here respects the end, predestination respects the means how to obtain it; so that the sense is this, Whom God foreknew that he would save, them he did predestinate to the means of salvation; *He hath predestinated us*, says the apostle, *that we might be conformed to the image of his Son*; that is, he predestinated them to grace, that is, the way and means to glory: so then where it is said, whom God foreknew, that signifies God's purpose and intention of saving some; where it is said, those he did predestinate, that signifies God's purpose of calling those whom he did intend to save unto the knowledge of his Son, and to the means whereby he might save them. It follows, *whom he predestinated, them he also called*; that is, with an effectual call, which is the same with regeneration; whom he predestinated, them he regenerated; and

whom he thus called or regenerated, *them he justified*. Here you see justification is put after regeneration, though indeed in order of nature it follows regeneration, for we are justified by faith: now faith is part of that new nature that is bestowed upon us in regeneration; we are justified by faith; wherefore faith is before justification, and is part of our regeneration. The apostle now proceeds to the last link of this golden chain, *Whom he justifies, them he also glorifies*; where we may observe that it is at least probable that the glorification that the apostle here speaks of, may not be the glory of Heaven, because he speaks of it as a thing already past and done; whom he hath justified he hath glorified: we may, without offering violence to the words, interpret it of *sanctification*; whom he hath justified, them he hath glorified, that is, sanctified; so that glorification here is no more than sanctification, for sanctification is also called glory. *We also beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory unto glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18: from glory to glory, that is, from one degree of sanctification to another; for indeed holiness, that is, our sanctification, and the glory of Heaven, are but one and the same thing for substance, differing in degrees and circumstances. BP. HOPKINS.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. These words were spoken to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This *master in Israel* came to Jesus by night. Convinced he seems to have been of the power which attended his ministry, but, under a still stronger attachment to his worldly interest, he durst not openly avow his conviction. Our Lord, at once to enlighten his mind with the most salutary of all truths, and level his pride of understanding by the manner of conveying it, saith to him, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* This appears to have been extremely astonishing, by his answer in the following verse: *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?*

It is not my purpose to give a tedious explication of the passage, or entertain the reader with a profusion of criticism

upon the words. This expression, *the kingdom of God*, hath various significations in Scripture, but chiefly two in the New Testament: 1. The gospel dispensation, or government of the Messiah, as distinguished from the preceding periods. 2. The kingdom of heaven, where the sincere disciples of Christ shall be put in full possession of the blessings of his purchase. I take it to be the last of these that is, either only, or chiefly intended in this place. Both of them indeed may be meant in their proper order, and for their different purposes. An open profession and receiving the external badge, was necessary to a concealed friend and cowardly disciple; but a right to the spiritual privileges of the gospel, and the promise of eternal life, was the only thing that could make the profession valuable or desirable. Accordingly, our Saviour seems to speak of both in his reply to Nicodemus' admission into the visible church by baptism, and renovation by the Holy Ghost: Jesus answered, *Verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

I am sensible that Regeneration, or the new birth, is a subject at present very unfashionable; or at least a style of language which hath gone very much into desuetude. It is, however, a subject of unspeakable moment; or rather, it is the one subject in which all others meet as in a centre; the grand inquiry, in comparison of which every thing else, how excellent soever, is but specious trifling. What doth it signify, though you have food to eat in plenty, and variety of raiment to put on, if you are not born again! if after a few mornings and evenings spent in unthinking mirth, sensuality, and riot, you die in your sins, and lie down in sorrow? What doth it signify, though you are well accomplished in every other respect, to act your part in life, if you meet at last with this repulse from the Supreme Judge, *Depart from me, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity?*

If this subject is indeed unfashionable and neglected, we are miserably deceiving ourselves. If a new nature is necessary, to attempt to repair and new-model the old will be found to be lost labor. If the spring is polluted, and continues so, what a vain and fruitless attempt is it to endeavor, by addition or by foreign mixture, to purify the streams! Just so, it is by no

means sufficient, or, to speak more properly, it is altogether impossible to reform the irregularities and vicious lives of sinners, and bring them to a real conformity to the law of God, till their hearts are renewed and changed. It is like rearing up an old fabric, adding to its towers, and painting its walls, while the foundation is gone. See what the prophet Ezekiel says of such foolish builders: *Wo to the foolish prophets!—because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace, and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.*

But perhaps the substance of the doctrine is retained, while the language is held in derision. We are told it is but a figurative expression, and the same in its meaning with repentance or reformation. Doubtless it is so. And it were greatly to be wished that many did thoroughly understand what is implied in repentance unto life. But the reader is entreated to observe, that it is a metaphor frequently used in the Holy Scripture. I think also it is a metaphor of peculiar propriety and force, well adapted to bring into view, both the nature of the change which it describes, and the means by which it is accomplished. If there are any who, in writing or speaking on this subject, have introduced or invented unscriptural phrases, and gone into unintelligible mysticism, this is neither wonderful in itself, nor ought it to be any injury or disparagement to the truth. There is no subject, either of divine or human learning, on which some have not written weakly, foolishly, or erroneously; but that ought not to excite any aversion to the doctrine itself which hath been perverted or abused. . . .

Let me now, in the most earnest manner, beseech every person to consider deliberately with himself what is the import of this truth, and how firmly it is established. It appears that regeneration, repentance, conversion, or call it what you will, is a very great change from the state in which every man comes into the world. This appears from our Saviour's assertion, that we must be *born again*. It appears from a great variety of other Scripture phrases, and is the certain con-

sequence of some of the most essential doctrines of the Gospel.

With what jealousy ought this to fill many of the state of their souls! How slight and inconsiderable a thing is it that, with multitudes, passes for religion; especially in these days of serenity and sunshine to the church, when they are not compelled by danger to weigh the matter with deliberation! A few cold forms, a little outward decency, some faint desires rather than endeavors, is all they can afford for securing their everlasting happiness. Can the weakness and insufficiency of these things possibly appear in a stronger light, than when true religion is considered as a new creation and a second birth? If the inspired writers be allowed to express themselves either with propriety or truth, it is painful to think of the unhappy degraded state of so great a number of our fellow-sinners.

Will so great a change take place, and yet have no visible effect? Had any great change happened in your worldly circumstances, from riches to poverty, or from poverty to riches, all around you would have speedily discerned it. Had any such change happened in your health, it had been impossible to conceal it. Had it happened in your intellectual accomplishments, from ignorance to knowledge, it would have been quickly celebrated. How comes it then to be quite undiscernible, when it is from sin to holiness? I am sensible that men are very ingenious in justifying their conduct, and very successful in deceiving themselves. They will tell us that religion is a hidden thing, not to be seen by the world, but lying open to his view who judgeth the secrets of all hearts. And doubtless this is, in one view, a great truth. True religion is not given to ostentation; diffident of itself, it is unwilling to promise much, lest it should be found wanting. But it ought to be considered that, however concealed the inward principle may be, the practical effects must of necessity appear. As one table of the moral law consists entirely of our duty to others, whoever is born again, and renewed in the spirit of his mind, will be found a quite different person from what he was before, in his conversation with his fellow-creatures.

Hypocritical pretences to extraordinary sanctity are indeed highly criminal in themselves, and extremely odious in the sight

of God. But the present age does not seem to have the least tendency to this extreme. There is another thing much more common, not less absurd, and infinitely more dangerous to mankind in general—a demand upon the public, that, by an extraordinary effort of charity, they should always suppose the reality of religion in the heart, when there is not the least symptom of it in the life. Nay, some are hardly satisfied even with this, but insist that men should believe well of others, not only without, but against evidence. A bad opinion expressed of a man, even upon the most open instances of profanity, is often answered with, ‘What have you to do to judge the heart?’ It is amazing to think what inward consolation sinners derive to themselves from this claim of forbearance from their fellow-creatures. Let me beseech all such to consider, that as God cannot be deceived, and will not be mocked, so in truth they usually deceive none but themselves. Every human affection, when it is strong and lively, will discover itself by its apparent effects; and it is as true of religious affections as of any other, that ‘the tree is known by its fruits.’

But if they have reason to suspect themselves whose change is not visible to others, how much more those who, if they deal faithfully, must confess they are quite strangers to any such thing in their own hearts? I do not mean that every person should be able to give an account of the time and manner of his conversion. That is often effected in so slow and gradual a manner, that it cannot be confined to a precise or particular period. But surely those who are no way sensible of any change in the course of their affections, and the objects at which they are pointed, can scarcely think that they are born again, or be able to affix a proper meaning to so strong an expression. I have read an observation of an eminent author, That those who cannot remember the time when they were ignorant or unlearned, have reason to conclude that they are so still; because, however slow and insensible the steps of improvement have been, the effects will at last clearly appear, by comparison with an uncultivated state. In the same manner, whoever cannot remember the time when he served the former lusts in his ignorance, has reason to conclude that no change deserving the name of regeneration has ever yet taken place.

It will be perhaps accounted an exception to this, that some are so early formed for the service of God, by his blessing on a pious education, and happily preserved from ever entering upon the destructive paths of vice, that they cannot be supposed to recollect the time when they were at enmity with God. But this is an objection of no consequence. The persons here described have generally so much tenderness of conscience, so deep a sense of the evil of sin, that of all others they will most readily discover and confess the workings of corruption in their own hearts, and that *law in their members that warreth against the law of God in their minds*. They will be of all others most sensible of the growth of the new, and mortification of the old nature; and will often remember the folly and vanity of youth, in instances that by most others would have been reckoned perfectly harmless.

What hath been said in this section is expressly designed to awaken such secure and careless formalists as may have any general belief of the word of God. To be born again must be a great change. Can you then suppose that you have undergone this, not only without any application to it, but without so much as being sensible of it, or being able to discover its proper effects?

DR. WITHERSPOON.

Necessity of Conversion.

SUCH is the stupid dotage of vain man, he can more easily persuade himself to believe that the sun itself should be transformed into a dunghill, that the holy God should lay aside his nature, and turn heaven into a place of impure darkness, than that he himself should need to undergo a change. O the powerful infatuation of self-love, that men in the gall of bitterness should think it is well with their spirits, and fancy themselves in a case good enough to enjoy divine pleasure; that (as the toad’s venom offends not itself) their loathsome wickedness, which all good men detest, is a pleasure to them; and while it is as the poison of asps under their lips, they roll it as a dainty bit, revolve it in their thoughts with delight! Their wickedness speaks itself out to the very hearts of others (Psal. xxxvi. 1, 2), while it never affects their own, and is found out to be hateful, while they still continue flattering themselves. And because they are without spot in their own eyes, they adventure so high, as to presume themselves so in

the pure eyes of God too ; and instead of designing to be like God, they already imagine him such a one as themselves, Psal. l. Hence their allotment of time (in the whole of it, the Lord knows, little enough) for the working out of their salvation spends apace ; while they do not so much as understand their business. Their measured hour is almost out ; an immense eternity is coming on upon them ; and, lo ! they stand as men that cannot find their hands. Urge them to the speedy, serious endeavor of a heart-change, earnestly to intend the business of regeneration, of becoming new creatures ; they seem to understand it as little, as if they were spoken to in an unknown tongue, and are in the like posture with the confounded builders of Babel, they know not what we mean, or would put them upon. They wonder what we would have them do. ‘ They are (say they) orthodox Christians : they believe all the articles of the Christian creed : they detest all heresy and false doctrine : they are no strangers to the house of God, but diligently attend the enjoined solemnities of public worship : some possibly can say, they are sober, just, charitable, peaceable ; and others that can boast less of their virtues, yet say, they are sorry for their sins, and pray God to forgive them.’ And if we urge them concerning their translation from the state of nature to that of grace, their becoming new creatures, their implantation into Christ ; they say they have been baptised, and therein regenerate, and what would we have more ?

But to how little purpose is it to equivocate with God ? to go about to put a fallacy upon the Judge of spirits ? or escape the animadversion of his fiery, flaming eye ? or elude his determinations, and pervert the true intent and meaning of his most established constitutions and laws ? Darest thou venture thy soul upon it ? that this is all God means, by having a new heart created, a right spirit renewed in us ; by being made God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works ; by becoming new creatures, old things being done away, all things made new ; by so learning the truth as it is in Jesus, to the putting off the old man, and putting on the new ; which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness ; by being begotten of God’s own will by the word of truth ; to be (the *απαρχή*) the chief excellency, the prime glory (as certainly his

new creature is his best creature), the first fruits, or the devoted part of all his creatures ; by having Christ formed in us ; by partaking the divine nature, the incorruptible seed, the seed of God ; by being born of God, spirit of spirit ; as of earthly parents we are born flesh of flesh, Psal. li. Eph. ii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. iv. 23, 24. Jam. i. 18. Gal. iv. 19. 2 Pet. i. 4. John iii. 6. When my eternal blessedness lies upon it, had I not need to be sure that I hit the true meaning of these Scriptures ? especially, that at least I fall not below it, and rest not in any thing short of what Scripture makes indispensably necessary to my entering into the kingdom of God ?

Howe.

Of the persons in our congregations, to whom we not only may, but must preach the doctrine of conversion plainly and directly, are those who, with the name indeed of Christians, have hitherto passed their lives without any internal religion whatever ; who have not at all thought upon the subject ; who, a few easy and customary forms excepted, (and which with them are mere forms,) cannot truly say of themselves, that they have done one action, which they would not have done equally, if there had been no such thing as a God in the world ; or that they have ever sacrificed any passion, any present enjoyment, or even any inclination of their minds, to the restraints and prohibitions of religion ; with whom indeed religious motives have not weighed a feather in the scale against interest or pleasure. To these it is utterly necessary that we preach conversion. At this day we have not Jews and Gentiles to preach to ; but these persons are really in as unconverted a state as any Jew or Gentile could be in our Saviour’s time. They are no more Christians as to any actual benefit of Christianity to their souls, than the most hardened Jew, or the most profligate Gentile was in the age of the Gospel. As to any difference in the two cases, the difference is all against them. These must be converted before they can be saved. The course of their thoughts must be changed, the very principles upon which they act must be changed. Considerations, which never, or which hardly ever entered into their minds, must deeply and perpetually engage them. Views and motives, which did not influence them at all,

either as checks from doing evil, or as inducements to do good, must become the views and motives which they regularly consult, and by which they are guided; that is to say, there must be a revolution of principle: the visible conduct will follow the change; but there must be a revolution within. A change so entire, so deep, so important as this, I do allow to be a conversion, and no one, who is in the situation above described, can be saved without undergoing it; and he must necessarily both be sensible of it at the time, and remember it all his life afterwards. It is too momentous an event ever to be forgot. A man might as easily forget his escape from a shipwreck. Whether it was sudden, or whether it was gradual, if it was effected, (and the fruits will prove that,) it was a true conversion: and every such person may justly both believe and say it himself, that he was converted at a particular assignable time. It may not be necessary to speak of his conversion, but he will always think of it, with unbounded thankfulness to the Giver of all grace, the Author of all mercies, spiritual as well as temporal. PALEY.

The Spirit, the Author of Conversion.

It is a very difficult work to draw a soul out of the hands and strong chains of Satan, and out of the pleasing entanglements of the world, and out of its own natural perverseness, to yield up itself unto God,—to deny itself, and live to him, and in so doing, to run against the main stream, and the current of the ungodly world without, and corruption within. The strongest rhetoric, the most moving and persuasive way of discourse, is all too weak; the tongue of men or angels cannot prevail with the soul to free itself, and shake off all that detains it. Although it be convinced of the truth of those things that are represented to it, yet still it can and will hold out against it, and say, *Non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris.*

The hand of man is too weak to pluck any soul out of the crowd of the world, and to set it in amongst the select number of believers. Only the Father of Spirits hath absolute command of spirits, viz. the souls of men, to work on them as he pleaseth, and where he will. This powerful, this sanctifying Spirit knows no resistance; works sweetly, and yet strongly; it can come into the heart, whereas all

other speakers are forced to stand without. That still voice within persuades more than all the loud crying without; as he that is within the house, though he speak low, is better heard and understood than he that shouts without doors.

When the Lord himself speaks by this his Spirit to a man, selecting and calling him out of the lost world, he can no more disobey than Abraham did, when the Lord spoke to him after an extraordinary manner, to depart from his own country and kindred: *Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken to him*, Gen. xii. 4. There is a secret, but very powerful, virtue in a word, or look, or touch of this Spirit upon the soul, by which it is forced, not with a harsh, but a pleasing violence, and cannot choose but follow it, not unlike that of Elijah's mantle upon Elisha. How easily did the disciples forsake their callings and their dwellings to follow Christ!

The Spirit of God draws a man out of the world by a sanctified light sent into his mind; 1. Discovering to him, how base and false the sweetness of sin is, which withholds men and amuses them, that they return not; and how true and sad the bitterness is that will follow upon it; 2. Setting before his eyes the free and happy condition, *the glorious liberty of the sons of God*, the riches of their present enjoyment, and their far larger and assured hopes for hereafter; 3. Making the beauty of Jesus Christ visible to the soul; which straightway takes it so, that it cannot be stayed from coming to him, though its most beloved friends, most beloved sins, lie in the way, and hang about it, and cry, Will you leave us so? It will tread upon all to come within the embraces of Jesus Christ, and say with St. Paul, *I was not disobedient to* (or *unpersuaded by*) *the heavenly vision.* LEIGHTON.

Reflect on what the Scripture calls *a stony heart*, a darkened understanding, a will enslaved by sin, and a man dead in trespasses. Consider the Scripture, which says, God himself must raise him, regenerate him, give him a heart of flesh, and write his law, with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart, 2 Cor. iii. 3; and you will easily understand, that where there is conversion, there is the work, not of man, but of the Holy Spirit, the triumph of the grace of God.

The natural man in a state of sin, is no more disposed in himself to receive the impression of God, and the renewal of his image, than the dust is to become a living and organised body. It must not be said that this is exaggerated. It is by no means. Try the effect of every power in nature upon corrupt man, upon this cold, lifeless lump of earth, and you will never give him spiritual life, and make him a new creature. Teach him philosophy, the principles of legislation, the precepts of Moses; let parents and masters come with their instructions; let even all the preachers urge their exhortations, their promises, and their threats; they will never form the new creature, unless God himself should come, and work upon this clod by his almighty and immediate operation, and create the new man and the new spirit.

Moreover, the natural man, far from being disposed to become a new creature, has a direct contrary tendency. In the creation of the world, there was nothing to resist, nothing to contend with the Creator. In the formation of man, the dust, which he was willing to dignify so highly, made no resistance; how indeed could the earth say, 'Why hast thou made me thus?' But in the work of conversion, this vile dust is rebellious against its Creator, and is in arms against him, who intends to form it a vessel unto honor. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, 'What makest thou?' When God says, *I will*, there is something in man, which answers, *I will not*.

To make us new creatures, his grace must triumph over our resistance, and render our rebellious will docile and obedient.

The change that takes place in conversion, is very great both in itself, and in its effects. A slight change would be undeserving the name of a new creation. If it consisted in making an outward show only, in a pharisaical or hypocritical righteousness, or in behaving like decent worldly people; in attaining to the virtue of philosophers, or even the state of many professing Christians; such changes would by no means deserve the name of a *new creature*; all these would signify very little. It was not needful for such purposes only, that the Son of God should leave Heaven, that he should come, and languish in misery, and die upon the cross;

it was not necessary that the Holy Ghos should appear in the form of fiery tongues, and that Jesus Christ should work so many miracles to establish the Gospel. Neither would it be necessary for God to display the whole efficacy of his grace. Human motives, civil regulations, may produce in some degree a change in our moral conduct; but there is a wide difference between *the new creature* and philosophical virtue, or morality. A life which is regulated by human principles only, is still the old Adam, who is well acquainted with the method of concealing his wrinkles with paint, and his deformity under an apparently beautiful mask. If you have human virtues only, I must still tell you, One thing thou lackest. What do I say? Thou hast nothing, thou lackest every thing.

But further: To have some relish for heavenly things, transient desires to lead a godly life, to abstain from certain sins, to weep sometimes on account of transgressions, or to get the better of certain passions; all these are far from being sufficient to form the new creature.

SUPERVILLE.

In order to correct dangerous mistakes, arising from that conceit which men generally entertain of their own ability to do good, it is necessary to show that this spiritual renovation is not to be produced by any human efforts, and that we are, as to this point, 'without strength.' When Christians are described as being regenerate, it is expressly declared, without excepting any who may be thought to possess in themselves greater power or virtue than others, *They were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man*, John i. 13. Their excellence of character and disposition is not what they brought into the world with them, or derived from their ancestry, however eminent in goodness; but it results entirely from that change, which has been wrought in them, not by any virtuous inclinations, resolutions, or efforts, within the compass of their corrupt nature, nor by the persuasions of friends, or teachers, but by a superior and more powerful influence.

This conclusion indeed might be drawn from the figurative descriptions given of it: for they lead us to infer, that the interposition of an almighty agent is absolutely requisite. It would be an extreme

absurdity to talk of any creature being the cause of its own birth, or the author of its own existence: it would be a folly too gross to be tolerated, to represent a lifeless corpse as having within itself a power of recovering its former animation and vigor. In these metaphors, then, of Regeneration, new Creation, and spiritual Resurrection, man's total inability to restore himself to his original righteousness is necessarily implied.

But the same thing is also manifest, without a figure, from the state of our hearts. There is in our very nature a strong and continual propensity to evil, a fixed and rooted love of sin and hatred of all holiness. How is this to be removed? That we should give ourselves different principles, or cordially desire a real and entire purity of mind, is contrary to the supposition of our depravity. *The carnal mind is enmity against God*: of itself therefore it will never submit, but obstinately persist in its rebellion. *It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*, Rom. viii. 7. This impossibility of producing such a subjection of the soul to God, as is included in regeneration, must remain till some foreign influence be exerted. This impossibility, however, is no other than man's determined adherence to sin and opposition to God, which constitute not his excuse but his guilt, and will be the ground of his condemnation. It is not to be inferred that he vehemently desires to be good, and is restrained from executing his pious purposes by some extrinsic force; but the true state of the case is, 'He **HATETH** to be reformed,'—'He **WILL NOT** turn, nor fear God.'

But here we behold the display of sovereign mercy. The Lord himself interposes, and by his new-creating power restores his image in the soul. For the sake of his beloved Son, who mediates on our behalf, he is ready to bestow his efficacious grace, and does actually confer the blessing upon all his redeemed people. Such is his own promise, *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. This subject, we doubt not, was understood, both as a doctrine and as a matter of experience, under the ancient dispensations of the Old Testament; but as a larger effusion of the Spirit was reserved for the times of the Gospel, we might expect that in the New Testament

it would be treated in a more clear and explicit manner. Accordingly, in almost every page our attention is directed to the necessity of a divine influence for the renovation of the soul. To be *born again*, and to be *born of God*, and of *the Spirit*, are in these Scriptures continually used as synonymous terms; from which the inference is undeniable, that God the Spirit is the Author of the change, John i. 13. iii. 3. 5. 1 John iii. 9. v. 1. 4. Such is the confession of faith delivered by primitive Christians, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour*, Titus iii. 5, 6. Here, as in many other passages, the three Persons of the Godhead are introduced as uniting in the same gracious plan, and our salvation is said to result from their joint interposition: but the alteration produced in the state of our minds is ascribed solely to the agency of the Spirit; it is *the renewing of the Holy Ghost*; who, as our Church expresses it, is 'the Lord and Giver of life.' (Nicene Creed.)

REV. T. ROBINSON.

A reply to the question, Is Man a mere machine?

BUT, say some, who understand not these spiritual and experimental truths; 'Are we then but mere machines, acting only as we are acted upon, without any proper volition or determination of our own?'

Nobody asks this question in relation to our bodies, in which the principles of action are far more apparent to our senses; and yet surely they cannot be supposed to be greater objects of Divine direction than are our souls. We see, we taste, we smell, we feel, we digest our food, or rather our food is digested in us, our blood circulates, our lungs vibrate, and an inscrutable chemistry is momentarily carrying on throughout our frame; and all this confessedly by the action of God, through the medium of material agents, without any appeal to our will, and generally as much without our attention, as the mode of operation is above our knowledge. This is kept up when we sleep, not less than in our waking hours; in abstraction of thought from the ideal world, as in the most intense applications of our faculties to the substances of matter; when we are engaged

in a variety of affairs about us, as when we direct our closest reflections immediately upon ourselves. But will any man say, that he has any share in ordering and supporting this wonderful mechanism, or that it is an automaton raised by himself? The Divine power ordained the faculty, and gives the consciousness, of sight: our wills were not consulted, whether we should have this sense; or, now we have it, whether it shall be affected or not. We taste our food: but can we, if we would, reject the organ by which we taste, or alter the mode of its sensation? We hear the sounds about us: but, is not the impression from without, and is not the perception within entirely independent of our volition? We feel a variety of motions through all our animal frame, not asking our leave or our wisdom to move; some circulating the pleasures of health and strength, and others compelling us to endure the sad reverse: and do we consider ourselves as absolute and unintelligent machines, notwithstanding these impressions of a superior power? or is it rather proper to a senseless machine, than to a living creature, not to be independent of a supreme agent, or not to be capable of resisting his supreme operations? But if, in the faculties of the body, we are thus acted upon, as we undoubtedly are, by the medium or instrumentality of the gross substances about us, as often without and above, as with our consent; and if God perform all this in us and in others, for the final accomplishment of his providential designs;* who can presume to say,

* It was a great concession for a man of Abp. Tillotson's persuasion, and extorted no doubt by the force of truth, to say, 'God is the fountain and original of all power, from whom it is derived, and upon whom it depends, and to whom it is perfectly subject and subordinate. He can do all things at once and in an instant, and with the greatest ease; and no created power can put any difficulty in his way, much less make any effectual resistance; because Omnipotence can check, and countermand, and bear down before it all other powers.' And again, 'The true reason of these things lies much deeper, in the secret providence of Almighty God, who when he pleaseth can so govern and overrule both the understandings and the wills of men, as shall best serve his own wise purpose and design.'—Serm. before the King and Queen, ix. and x. pp. 12, and 6. Solomon says, *the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will*, Prov. xxi. 1. If the heart of kings be thus in the hand of the Lord, 'ruled and governed, disposed and turned, as it seemeth best to his godly wisdom;' it implies most strongly, that no other man's heart can be out of it.

that, in the more sublime and spiritual properties of the mind, which are so much more congenial with himself than matter can be, the same Almighty agent doth not begin, sustain, and carry on those mental impressions and activities, which, under the name of grace, constitute the very life, peace, wisdom, strength, experience, and ultimate expectation of the soul? Who can venture to deny that God is the Alpha and Omega of his people's faith and salvation, wrought in them and for them; when he himself, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, hath been pleased to affirm that he is? How he doeth this is another question, which we can no more define than we can define the mode of his operation upon those gross substances our bodies: it is sufficient for us to know, that it is done, and that he doeth it; or, in other words which are his own, that *in him we live, and move* (or, *are moved*), *and have our being*. Were it otherwise, we could not be a part of his creation, either natural or divine. But will any one presume to say, that all this is making us, or the angels above us, dull machines, without life or consciousness?

Moreover; his providence hath established natural means, put them within our natural reach, and given us natural powers to use them. By this providence, we can read and hear his word; attend his ordinances, and wait at the gates of wisdom. We can be in the way, like Abraham's servant; and, being there, may expect, with him, that the Lord will meet us. Out of the way, we have assurances of nothing but evil.

I have said all this to obviate a common cavil, which, after all, can only be fully answered to a man's mind by the instruction of him, *who worketh* in every believer *both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*. When the soul is converted to God, the wisdom and experience obtained in that conversion will teach and convince more in one moment, than the ablest human lessons in the world. And, unless such conversion do take place, could the mind be convinced by any arguments or representations, they would be but of little weight or consequence to the person's present peace or conduct, and still less to his everlasting welfare.

God worketh upon his people's souls by his wisdom and truth, which in them are ever accompanied by the energies of his

mighty power, Eph. i. 19. *In the day or time of this power, they are made willing, or willingness itself, in the abstract, as the original implies, Ps. cx. 3. Not by brutal force (as some have talked), nor yet by mere moral suasion (as others have dreamed); but by giving life to the dead, by bringing the prisoners out of the prison-house, by bestowing sight upon the blind, and in a word, by creating all things new.*

SERLE.

Regard of God for His own Image in the renewed soul.

THIS divine life begun and kindled in any heart, wheresoever it be, is something of God in flesh, and, in a sober and qualified sense, divinity incarnate; and all particular Christians that are really possessed of it, so many mystical Christs.

And God forbid that God's own life and nature here in the world should be forlorn, forsaken, and abandoned of God himself. Certainly wherever it is, though never so little, like a sweet, young, tender babe, once born in any heart, when it crieth unto God the Father of it, with pitiful and bemoaning looks imploring his compassion, it cannot choose but move his fatherly bowels, and make them yearn, and turn towards it, and by strong sympathy draw his compassionate arm to help and relieve it. Never was any tender infant so dear to those bowels that begat it, as an infant new-born Christ, formed in the heart of any true believer, to God the Father of it. Shall *the children of this world, the sons of darkness*, be moved with such tender affection and compassion towards the fruit of their bodies, their own natural offspring? and shall God, who is the *Father of lights*, the Fountain of all goodness, be moved with no compassion towards his true spiritual offspring, and have no regard to those sweet babes of light engendered by his own beams in men's hearts, that in their lovely countenances bear the resemblance of his own face, and call him their Father? Shall he see them lie fainting, and gasping, and dying here in the world, for want of nothing to preserve and keep them but an influence from him who first gave them life and breath? No; hear the language of God's heart; hear the sounding of his bowels towards them: *Is it Ephraim, my dear son? Is it that pleasant child? Since I spake of him, I do earnestly remember*

him; my bowels, my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord. If those expressions of goodness and tender affection here among the creatures be but drops of that full ocean that is in God, how can we then imagine that this Father of our spirits should have so little regard to his own dear offspring, I do not say our souls, but that which is the very life and soul of our souls, the life of God in us, (which is nothing else but God's own self communicated to us, his own Son born in our hearts,) as that he should suffer it to be cruelly murdered in its infancy by our sins, and, like young Hercules, in its very cradle to be strangled by those filthy vipers? that he should see him to be crucified by wicked lusts, nailed fast to the cross by invincible corruptions, pierced and gored on every side with the poisoned spears of the devil's temptations, and at last to give up the ghost; and yet his tender heart not at all relent, nor be all this while impassioned with so sad a spectacle? Surely we cannot think he hath such an adamant breast, such a flinty nature as this is?

CUDWORTH.

Unregenerate Men must labor to be Regenerate.

BEWARE that you do not flatter yourselves with any deluding hopes of heaven; you are as yet without any right to it. This is indeed a dreadful caution—what! to beat men off from their hopes of heaven? And commonly it proves as fruitless as it is dreadful; men's hopes of all things frequently deceive them; they maintain themselves with little, especially the hopes they have of heaven, and they live either upon weak probabilities, or upon strong fancies; and hence the Scripture compares the hope of a hypocrite to a spider's web, Job viii. 14. Men spin out their hopes out of their own bowels, and settle themselves in the midst of them, and doubt not but they shall catch heaven itself in their foolish cobwebs. Should I come and ask you all one by one, Do you, and you, hope to be saved? Where is the person that would not by his disdain at the very question testify how high and how great his hopes are? Would not the drunkard, the swearer, the profane person, and the whole rabble of wicked and ungodly wretches, speak as confidently of their

salvation, as if they were born with sure proofs of heaven in their hands? What, are these men regenerate? Or is the price of heaven fallen, and God become willing to part with it on lower terms than the new birth? Art thou regenerated, that hatest God and Godliness, and all those that bear the least resemblance to the divine purity? Art thou regenerated, that makest an impudent scoff at the name, and deridest the very title that fallen man hath unto happiness? Is it likely that the new nature should be hid under an old life? Regeneration is the ransacking of the soul, the turning of a man out of himself, the crumbling to pieces of the old man, and the new-moulding of it into another shape; it is the turning of stones into children, and a drawing of the lively portraiture of Jesus Christ upon that very table that before represented only the very image of the devil. This mighty change is wrought by regeneration; man's partaking of the Divine Nature is the greatest change that ever was wrought in heaven or in earth, unless it were God's partaking of the humane nature. Why now, art thou thus changed? Are all old things done away, and all things in thee become new? Hast thou a new heart and renewed affections? And dost thou serve God in newness of life and conversation? If not, what hast thou to do with hopes of Heaven? Thou art yet without Christ, and so consequently without hope. Sinners, what is it that you trust to? Is it your own good works? This is indeed the common refuge of those that have fewest good works to produce; but, alas, what confidence canst thou repose in these, when *the very prayer of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord*? Is it the merit of Christ that you rely upon? Why, Christ becomes a Saviour to none but to those in whose hearts he is first formed. Is it some slight and general notions of God's mercy that you trust to? It is true, God is infinitely merciful, though he hath already damned thousands for their sins; and he will remain for ever infinitely merciful, when thou also art damned among them. It is in vain to press the mercy of God to serve your foolish hopes against that inviolable truth of his, that hath excluded you out of Heaven; except you be *born again, you can in no wise enter into the kingdom of God*. This is that irreversible sentence that is written on Heaven's gates—no entering there, but by pass-

ANTH.

ing first through the new birth; no dogs nor swine must come into that holy city; and such are all unrenewed persons; yea, the Scripture calls them the children of the Devil; *Ye are of your father the Devil*, John viii. 40. And certainly, that God who hath chased devils out of Heaven, will never admit any of his rude offspring into it. And therefore let me exhort you not to flatter yourselves into hell and destruction with false and deluding hopes of Heaven.

Secondly, *Give no rest either to God, or to yourselves, till this thorough change be wrought upon you in your regeneration*.

It is of absolute necessity unto eternal salvation; and unless you think that salvation itself is not of absolute necessity, what can be the reason that you trifle and dally in that which is of so **vast a concernment**? What is it that you can plead for yourselves? Is it that it is not within the compass of your power to regenerate yourselves? It is true: but although you cannot form this new nature in you, why do you not yet do your utmost to prepare and dispose yourselves to receive it? Though we are all lamed and crippled by our fall which we took in Adam, yet, such cripples as we are, may notwithstanding make shift to get into that way by which Christ useth to pass, and may possibly be healed by him. It is a sure rule, *Though God is not bound to give Grace upon men's endeavors, yet neither is he wont to deny it*. Do you expect that this change, like that of the surviving saints at the last day, should pass upon you ere you are aware of it, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye? It is true, man's change of heart is the greatest miracle that God works in the world; but yet he works it in an ordinary way, by our own endeavors as well as by his own irresistible and victorious grace; and therefore God calls upon us, Ezek. xviii. 31, *Make you a new heart, and a new spirit, for why will you die?* Do not therefore cheat your souls into eternal perdition by such lazy conceits of your own weakness and impotency; do not content yourselves with a few yawning drowsy wishes, expecting till divine grace doth of its own self drop down out of Heaven, and of its own accord change your hearts; possibly before that time you yourselves may irrecoverably drop into hell: will you lose your souls for ever, only out of a

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wretched sloth? Doth one end of them lie burning as a brand in hell fire, and will you not stretch out your hand to pluck it thence? Believe it, as long as you continue in a sinful state, you are wrapt about with ten thousand curses, the wrath of God is continually making its approaches unto you, and there is only a thin mud wall of flesh to fence it out, which is still mouldering and falling away, and whether it will be able to hold out one day longer you know not: you hang over the bottomless pit only by the weak thread of a frail life, which is ready to be snapt asunder every moment; and if some consuming sickness should fret this thread, or some unforeseen casualty should break it off suddenly; if death work a change upon you before grace works a change in you, of all God's creation you are the most miserable; better that you had been the most loathsome creature that crawls upon God's earth, yea, better that you had never been, than that you should forget and neglect this great work of renovation one moment too long: therefore use no delay; every moment that is not this present, is too long a delay: while you are dreaming of repentance and converting some months, or possibly some years hence, God may snatch you away before the next sand is run in time's glass; and where are you then? *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation*: whatever is not now, may be too late; and ere that time comes that you have prefixed to yourselves, God may set up your souls as flaming monuments of his displeasure, justice, and severity, in hell for ever.

If you ask me what you shall do to be renewed? I answer, the directions are not many; take only these two.

First, *Be instant with God by prayer, that he would by his Omnipotent Grace new-create you to himself, and stamp again upon you his effaced image.* There is a prevalency in the prayer of a mere natural man when he prays for grace; else St. Peter would never have exhorted Simon Magus, who was in the *gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, to pray that so the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.*

Secondly, *Improve diligently all the means of regeneration, whereof the Word is the chief.* *Of his own will begat he us by the Word of Truth,* says the Apostle, James i. 18. Attend it constantly, medi-

tate upon it frequently, endeavor faithfully to practise it; this hath been the way in all ages that hath proved successful for the bringing in of sinners unto God: Heaven is full of happy souls that hath been fitted for that glorious estate, by such very ordinances as these are that now you set under. It is true, these are not of themselves a sufficient means; alas, what is the weak breath of a poor man to make impressions upon hearts that are harder than the *nether mill-stones*? What can we do to give sight to the blind, and life to the dead, but only God who demolished the walls of Jericho by the sound of a few rams' horns, doth likewise make use of the preaching of the Gospel to demolish the strong holds of Satan, which would have been as impertinent and as insignificant a sound as that was, had not God put his institution upon it, and his Spirit into it? Wait upon the ordinances therefore, that that happy soul-saving word may at length be spoken that may cause thee to arise, and to stand up from the dead; endeavor to do whatever lies in thy power in order to thy regeneration: it is true, it is not in our power to make ourselves new creatures; but when God sees thee conscientiously improving that power that thou hast, he will then give thee that power that thou wantest. Never yet was there an instance of any that did vigorously to their utmost labor after grace, that did not also leave some good evidences behind them that they did obtain it; and certainly thou hast no reason to think that God will make thee the first instance and president. So much for this time, and for this subject.

BP. HOPKINS.

Though the Regenerate Man is subject to the law of Sin, yet he is at constant warfare with it.

If you have understood these things, and find corruption in you, and can talk never so well of its various contentions and workings; that will not prove you to have grace in your heart, and to be a regenerate soul: there may be much light in the understanding, and that may beget a great stir in the conscience, when, nevertheless, there is no change wrought on the will and affections. Wherefore, you should consider, that, while the Apostle here describes a regenerate person as having much sin, and corruption, and that but too apt to gain some advantages upon

him; he does at the same time set him out, as having a will to do good, as hating evil, as delighting in the law of God in the inner man, as warring against the law of sin in his members, as groaning under it as the most heavy and intolerable burden. Now, not one of these things is the case of an unregenerate man; no, not with the highest measure of light in his understanding, or the most reproving pangs of guilt in his conscience. Such cannot say, they have a will to do good, and hate evil; that they delight in the law of God in the inner man; or, that they penitently groan under the body of sin. And this matter should be much noted; for when people have heard a great deal of the spirituality of the law, and of the corruption of their own nature, which you know is your case, and are grown up to some degree of acquaintance with these points, they may be apt to stop short of conversion; and that especially, if, as is mostly the case, what has been heard about the Law and the Gospel has produced some awakenings of conscience, and they find some outward reformation and profession; wherefore we should make full proof of a real change wrought upon us, through faith in Jesus Christ. How shall we do this? The answer is, you may try yourself, whether you be in the faith stated by the Apostle, in the passage before us, Rom. vii. 14. ad ult.; in order to which you will take notice, that here are represented the struggles between grace and nature in a regenerate soul. In relating this conflict, two contrary principles are brought before you, as both dwelling in the regenerate; which he expresses by two, that is, his natural and renewed self, which as two persons of different characters are dwelling in him. Concerning his renewed self, he says, that he habitually and determinately consented to the law that it is good, delighted in it after the inner man, served it with his mind, and consequently

disallowed and hated the evil that he did. Yet, at the same time, he confesses concerning his natural self, that he was carnal, and sold under sin, brought into captivity by the law of his members, and served the law of sin with the flesh. Is there any contradiction here? No. It must be thus, while two such different principles as grace and sin dwell together. When we talk *of* a Christian, we are wont to conceive a perfect character; when we talk *with* him, we find him the very thing here described; a person in whom the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. The question is not, whether I am perfect, but whether I am regenerate? and so, not whether I have no corruption in me, but whether I have grace in me, warring against corruption, and in the general course overcoming it? How shall I know that, you will say? I find that the good I would do, I do not; and again, that the evil, which I would not do, I too often do; and this makes me doubt my conversion. But do you really find this? What, do you really find you would do, with all your soul, the good you do not, and so would not do the evil you do? Then it is plain God has given you a will; and in that case, I dare answer for you, you can say also, you consent to the law that is good, and delight in it in the inner man, and serve it with the mind: and beyond these expressions, rightly understood, I know none more eminently descriptive of a gracious state in the whole Scriptures. Take this passage into the nearest consideration. Have you the complaints of the regenerate man here described? that is no ill token. But can you adopt too his dispositions and conduct? then it is manifest you cannot be mistaken; and by the way, it looks to me as if the Spirit had designed this passage for the relief of tender and doubting minds. REV. SAM. WALKER.

SECTION IX.—ON THE SACRAMENTS.

On the Efficacy of the Two Sacraments.

It greatly offendeth, that some, when they labor to show the use of the Holy Sacraments, assign unto them no end but only to teach the mind, by other senses, that which the word doth teach by hear-

ing. Whereupon, how easily neglect and careless regard of so heavenly mysteries may follow, we see in part by some experience had of those men with whom that opinion is most strong. For where the word of God may be heard, which teacheth with much more expedition, and more

full explications, any thing we have to learn; if all the benefit we reap by sacraments be instruction, they which at all times have opportunity of using the better mean to that purpose, will surely hold the worse in less estimation. And unto infants which are not capable of instruction, who would not think it a mere superfluity, that any sacrament is administered, if to administer the sacraments be but to teach receivers what God doth for them? There is of sacraments therefore, undoubtedly, some other more excellent and heavenly use. Sacraments, by reason of their mixed nature, are more diversly interpreted and disputed of, than any other parts of religion besides; for that in so great store of properties belonging to the self-same thing, as every man's wit hath taken hold of some especial consideration above the rest, so they have accordingly seemed one to cross another, as touching their several opinions about the necessity of sacraments; whereas in truth their disagreement is not great. For, let respect be had to the duty which every communicant doth undertake, and we may well determine concerning the use of sacraments, that they serve as bonds of obedience to God, strict obligations to the mutual exercise of Christian charity, provocations to godliness, preservations from sin, memorials of the principal benefits of Christ; respect the time of their institution, and it thereby appeareth, that God hath annexed them for ever unto the New Testament, as other rites were before with the Old; regard the weakness which is in us, and they are warrants for the more security of our belief; compare the receivers of them with such as receive them not, and sacraments are marks of distinction to separate God's own from strangers: so that in all these respects, they are found to be most necessary. But their chiefest force and virtue consisteth not herein so much, as in that they are heavenly ceremonies, which God hath sanctified and ordained to be administered in his church: first, as marks whereby to know when God doth impart the vital or saving grace of Christ unto all that are capable thereof; and, secondly, as means conditional, which God requireth in them unto whom he imparteth grace. For, since God in himself is invisible, and cannot by us be discerned working; therefore when it seemeth good in the eyes of his heavenly wisdom, that men, for some special intent and purpose,

should take notice of his glorious presence, he giveth them some plain and sensible token whereby to know what they cannot see. For Moses to see God and live, was impossible; yet Moses, by fire, knew where the glory of God extraordinarily was present. The angel, by whom God endued the waters of the pool, called Bethesda, with supernatural virtue to heal, was not seen of any; yet the time of the angel's presence known by the troubled motions of the waters themselves. The Apostles, by fiery tongues which they saw, were admonished when the Spirit, which they could not behold, was upon them: in like manner it is with us. Christ and his holy Spirit with all their blessed effects, though entering into the soul of man we are not able to apprehend or express how, do notwithstanding give notice of the times when they use to make their access, because it pleaseth Almighty God to communicate by sensible means those blessings which are incomprehensible. Seeing therefore that grace is a consequent of sacraments, a thing which accompanieth them as their end, a benefit which they have received from God himself the author of sacraments, and not from any other natural or supernatural quality in them; it may be hereby both understood, that sacraments are necessary, and that the manner of their necessity to life supernatural is not in all respects as food unto natural life, because they contain in themselves no vital force or efficacy: they are not physical, but moral instruments of salvation, duties of service and worship; which unless we perform as the Author of grace requireth, they are unprofitable. For, all receive not the grace of God, which receive the sacraments of his grace. Neither is it ordinarily his will to bestow the grace of sacraments on any, but by the sacraments; which grace also, they that receive by sacraments or with sacraments, receive it from him, and not from them. For of sacraments, the very same is true which Solomon's wisdom observeth in the brazen serpent, *He that turned towards it, was not healed by the thing he saw, but by thee, O Saviour of all*. This is therefore the necessity of sacraments: That saving grace which Christ originally is, or hath for the general good of his whole church, by sacraments he severally deriveth into every member thereof. Sacraments serve

as the instruments of God, to that end and purpose: moral instruments, the use whereof is in our own hands, the effect in his; for the use, we have his express commandment; for the effect, his conditional promise: so that without our obedience to the one, there is of the other no apparent assurance; as contrariwise, where the signs and sacraments of his grace are not either through contempt unreceived, or received with contempt, we are not to doubt, but that they really give what they promise, and are what they signify. For we take not Baptism, nor the Eucharist, for bare resemblances or memorials of things absent, neither for naked signs and testimonies assuring us of grace received before, but (as they are indeed and in verity) for means effectual, whereby God, when we take the sacraments, delivereth into our hands that grace available unto eternal life, which grace the sacraments represent or signify. There have grown in the doctrine concerning sacraments many difficulties for want of distinct explication, what kind or degree of grace doth belong unto each sacrament. For by this it hath come to pass, that the true immediate cause why Baptism, and why the Supper of our Lord is necessary, few do rightly and distinctly consider. It cannot be denied, but sundry the same effects and benefits which grow unto men by the one sacrament, may rightly be attributed unto the other. Yet then doth Baptism challenge to itself but the inchoation of those graces, the consummation whereof dependeth on mysteries ensuing. We receive Christ Jesus in Baptism once, as the first beginner; in the Eucharist often, as being, by continual degrees, the finisher of our life. By Baptism therefore we receive Christ Jesus; and from him that saving grace which is proper unto baptism. By the other sacrament we receive him also, imparting therein himself, and that grace which the Eucharist properly bestoweth. So that each sacrament having both that which is general or common, and that also which is peculiar unto itself, we may hereby gather, that the participation of Christ, which properly belongeth to any one sacrament, is not otherwise to be obtained, but by the sacrament whereunto it is proper.

HOOKE.

in this matter: the one is of the Church of Rome, that teaches, that as some sacraments imprint a character upon the soul, which they define to be a physical quality, that is, supernatural and spiritual; so they do all carry along with them such a divine virtue, that by the very receiving them (the *opus operatum*) it is conveyed to the souls of those to whom they are applied, unless they themselves put a bar in the way of it by some mortal sin. In consequence of this, they reckon that by the sacraments given to a man in his agonies, though he is very near past all sense, and so cannot join any lively acts of his mind with the sacraments, yet he is justified: not to mention the common practice of giving extreme unction in the last agony, when no appearance of any sense is left. This we reckon a doctrine that is not only without all foundation in Scripture, but that tends to destroy all religion, and to make men live on securely in sin, trusting to this, that the sacraments may be given them when they die. The conditions of the New Covenant are repentance, faith, and obedience; and we look on this as the corrupting the vitals of this religion, when any such means are proposed, by which the main design of the Gospel is quite overthrown. The business of a character is an unintelligible notion. We acknowledge baptism is not to be repeated; but that is not by virtue of a character imprinted in it, but because it being a dedication of the person to God in the Christian religion, what is once so done, is to be understood to continue still in that state, till such a person falls into an open apostasy. In case of the repentance of such a person, we, finding that the primitive Church did reconcile, but not rebaptise apostates, do imitate that their practice; but not because of this late and unexplicable notion of a character. We look on all sacramental actions as acceptable to God only with regard to the temper, and the inward acts of the person to whom they are applied, and cannot consider them as medicines or charms, which work by a virtue of their own, whether the person to whom they are applied co-operates with them, or not. Baptism is said by St. Peter to save us, not as it is an action that washes us; *not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God*, 1 Pet. iii. 21. And therefore baptism without this pro-

There are two extremes to be avoided

fession, is no baptism, but seems to be used as a charm, unless it is said, that this answer or profession is implied whensoever baptism is desired. When a person of age desires baptism, he must make those answers and sponsions, otherwise he is not truly baptised; and though this outward making of them being all that can fall under human cognisance, he who does that must be held to be truly baptised, and all the outward privileges of a baptised person must belong to him; yet as to the effect of baptism on the soul of him that is baptised, without doubt that depends upon the sincerity of the professions and vows made by him. The wills of infants are by the law of nature and nations in their parents, and are transferred by them to their sureties. The sponsions that are made on their behalf are considered as made by themselves: but there the outward act is sufficient; for the inward acts of one person cannot be supposed necessary to give the sacrament its virtue in another.

In the Eucharist, by *our showing forth our Lord's death till he comes*, 1 Cor. x. 16., we are admitted to the *communion of his body and blood*; to a share in partnership with other Christians in the effects and merits of his death. But the unworthy receiver is guilty of his body and blood, and brings thereby down judgments upon himself. So that to fancy a virtue in sacraments that works on the person to whom they are applied without any inward acts accompanying it, and upon his being only passive, is a doctrine of which we find nothing in the Scriptures; which teach us that every thing we do is only accepted of God, with regard to the disposition of mind that he knows us to be in when we go about it. Our prayers and sacrifices are so far from being accepted of God, that they are *abomination* to him, if they came from wicked and defiled hearts. The making men believe that

sacraments may be effectual to them when they are next to a state of passivity, not capable of any sensible thoughts of their own, is a sure way to raise the credit of the clergy, and of the sacrament; but at the same time it will most certainly dispose men to live in sin, hoping that a few rites, which may be easily procured at their death, will clear all at last. And thus we reject, not without great zeal against the fatal effects of this error, all that is said of the *opus operatum*, the very doing of the sacrament: we think it looks liker the incantations of heathenism, than the purity and simplicity of the Christian religion.

But the other extreme, that we likewise avoid, is that of sinking the sacraments so low, as to be mere rites and ceremonies. St. Peter says, *Baptism saves us*, Tit. iii. 5. St. Paul calls it, *the laver of regeneration*; Mar. xvi. 16. to which he joins the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, John iii. 3. 5. Our Saviour saith, *He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved*: and, *Except ye are born again of water, and of the Spirit, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. These words have a sense and signification that rises far above a mere ceremony done to keep up order, and to maintain a settled form. The phrase, *communion of the body and blood of Christ*, is above the nature of an anniversary or memorial feast. This opinion we think is very unsuitable to those high expressions; and we do not doubt but that Christ, who instituted those sacraments, does still accompany them with a particular presence in them, and a blessing upon them; so that we coming to them with minds well prepared, with pure affections and holy resolutions, do certainly receive in and with them particular largesses of the favor and bounty of God. They are not bare and naked remembrances and tokens; but are actuated and animated by a divine blessing that attends upon them.

BP. BURNET.

SECTION X.—ON BAPTISM.

The Design of Baptism.

IF Baptism were only the receiving us into the society of Christians, there were no need of saying, *I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. It were more proper

to say, *I baptise thee in the name, or by the authority of the Church*. Therefore these august words, that were dictated by our Lord himself, show us that there is somewhat in it that is internal, which comes from God; that it is an admitting men into somewhat that depends only on

God, and for the giving of which the authority can only be derived by him. But after all, this is not to be believed to be of the nature of a charm, as if the very act of baptism carried always with it an inward regeneration. Here we must confess, that very early some doctrines arose upon baptism, that we cannot be determined by. The words of our Saviour to Nicodemus were expounded so, as to import the absolute necessity of baptism in order to salvation: for it not being observed that the dispensation of the Messiah was meant by the kingdom of God, but it being taken to signify eternal glory, that expression of our Saviour's was understood to import this, that no man could be saved unless he were baptised; so it was believed to be simply necessary to salvation. A natural consequence that followed upon that, was to allow all persons leave to baptise, clergy and laity, men and women, since it seemed necessary to suffer every person to do that without which salvation could not be had. Upon this, these hasty baptisms were used, without any special sponson on the part of those who desired it; of which it may be reasonably doubted whether such a baptism be true, in which no sponson is made: and this cannot be well answered but by saying, that a general and an implied sponson is to be considered to be made by their parents while they desire them to be baptised.

Another opinion that arose out of the former, was the mixing of the outward and the inward effects of baptism; it being believed that every person that was *born of the Water*, was also *born of the Spirit*; and that the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, did always accompany *the washing of Regeneration*. And this obliged St. Austin (as was formerly told) to make that difference between the *regenerate* and the *predestinated*; for he thought that all who were baptised, were also regenerated. St. Peter has stated this so fully, that if his words are well considered, they will clear the whole matter. He, after he had set forth the miserable state in which mankind was, under the figure of the Deluge, in which an ark was prepared for Noah and his family, says upon that, *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us*, 1 Pet. iii. 21. Upon which he makes a short digression to explain the nature of baptism, *Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer* (or

the demand and interrogation) *of a good conscience towards God; by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into Heaven*. The meaning of all which is, that Christ having risen again, and having then had *all power in Heaven and in Earth* given to him, he had put that virtue in baptism, that by it we are *saved*, as in an ark, from that miserable state in which the world lies, and in which it must perish. But then he explains the way how it saves us; that it is not as a physical action, as it washes away the filthiness of the flesh, or the body; like the notion that the Gentiles might have of their *Februations*; or, which is more natural, considering to whom he writes, like the opinions that the Jews had of their *cleansings* after their *legal impurities*, from which their washings and bathings did absolutely free them. The salvation that we Christians have by baptism is effected by that federation into which we enter, when upon the demands that are made of our renouncing the *devil*, the *world*, and the *flesh*, and of our believing in Christ, and our *repentance* towards God, we make such *answers* from a *good conscience*, as agree with the end and design of baptism; then by our thus coming into covenant with God, we are saved in baptism. So that the salvation by baptism is given by reason of the federal compact that is made in it. Now this being made outwardly, according to the rules that are prescribed, that must make the baptism good among men, as to all the outward and visible effects of it: but since it is the *answer of a good conscience* only that *saves*, then an answer from a bad conscience, from a hypocritical person, who does not inwardly think or purpose according to what he professes outwardly, cannot save; but does on the contrary aggravate his damnation. Therefore our article puts the efficacy of baptism, in order to the forgiveness of our sins, and to our adoption and salvation, upon the virtue of prayer to God; that is, upon those vows, and other acts of devotion that accompany them: so that when the seriousness of the mind accompanies the regularity of the action, then both the outward and inward effects of baptism are attained by it; and we are not only *baptised into one body*, but are also *saved by baptism*. So that upon the whole matter, baptism is a federal admission into Chris-

tianity; in which, on God's part, all the blessings of the Gospel are made over to the baptised: and on the other hand, the person baptised takes on him, by a solemn profession and vow, to observe and adhere to the whole Christian religion. So it is a very natural distinction to say, that the outward effects of baptism follow it as outwardly performed; but that the inward effects of it follow upon the inward acts. But this difference is still to be observed between inward acts and outward actions; that when the outward action is rightly performed, the Church must reckon the baptism good, and never renew it: but if one has been wanting in the inward acts, those may be afterwards renewed, and that want may be made up by repentance.

BP. BURNET.

The Power and Virtue of Baptism.

THAT Baptism hath a power, is clear, in that it is so expressly said, *it doth save us*, 1 Pet. iii. 21: what kind of power, is equally clear from the way it is here expressed; not by a natural force of the element: though adapted and sacramentally used, it only can wash away the filth of the body; its physical efficacy or power reaches no further: but it is in the hand of the Spirit of God, as other sacraments are, and as the word itself is, to purify the conscience, and convey grace and salvation to the soul, by the reference it hath to, and union with, that which it represents. It saves *by the answer of a good conscience unto God*, and it affords that, *by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead*.

Thus, then, we have a true account of the power of this, and so, of other sacraments, and a discovery of the error of two extremes: 1. Of those who ascribe too much to them, as if they wrought by a natural inherent virtue, and carried grace in them inseparably: 2. Of those who ascribe too little to them, making them only signs and badges of our profession. Signs they are, but more than signs merely representing; they are means exhibiting, and seals confirming, grace to the faithful. But the working of faith, and the conveying of Christ into the soul to be received by faith, is not a thing put into them to do of themselves, but still in the Supreme Hand that appointed them: and He indeed both causes the souls of his own to receive these his seals with faith, and makes them effectual to confirm that faith which receives

them so. They are then, in a word, neither empty signs to them who believe, nor effectual causes of grace to them who believe not.

The mistake, on both sides, arises from the want of duly considering the relative nature of these seals, and that kind of union that is betwixt them and the grace they represent, which is real, though not natural or physical, as they speak; so that though they do not save all who partake of them, yet they do really and effectually save believers, (for whose salvation they are means,) as the other external ordinances of God do. Though they have not that power which is peculiar to the Author of them, yet a power they have, such as befits their nature, and by reason of which they are truly said to sanctify and justify, and so, to save, as the Apostle here avers of Baptism.

Now, that which is intended for our help, our carnal minds are ready to turn into an hinderance and disadvantage. The Lord representing invisible things to the eye, and confirming his promises even by visible seals, we are apt, from the grossness of our unspiritual hearts, instead of stepping up by that which is earthly, to the Divine spiritual things represented, to stay in the outward element, and go no further. Therefore, the Apostle, to lead us into the inside of this seal of Baptism, is very clear in designating the effect and fruit of it: *Not (says he) the putting away the filth of the flesh*, (and water, if you look no further, can do no more;) there is an invisible impurity upon our nature, chiefly on our invisible part, our soul: this washing means the taking away of that; and where it reaches its true effect, it doth so purify the conscience, and makes it good, truly so, in the sight of God, who is the judge of it.

Consider, 1. It is a pitiful thing to see the ignorance of the most, professing Christianity, and partaking of the outward seals of it, yet, not knowing what they mean; not apprehending the spiritual dignity and virtue of them. Blind in the *mysteries of the kingdom*, they are not so much as sensible of that blindness. And being ignorant of the nature of these holy things, they cannot have a due esteem of them, which arises out of the view of their inward worth and efficacy. A confused fancy they have of some good in them, and this rising to the other extreme,

to a superstitious confidence in the simple performance and participation of them, as if that carried some inseparable virtue with it, which none could miss of, who are sprinkled with the waters of Baptism, and share in the elements of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper.

And what is the utmost plea of the most for their title to heaven, but that in these relative and external things they are Christians; that they are baptised, hear the word, and are admitted to the Lord's table?—Not considering how many have gone through all these, who yet, daily are going on in the ways of death, never coming near Jesus Christ, *who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life*, whom the word, and the seals of it, hold forth to believers. And they are washed in his blood, and quickened with his life, and made like him, and co-heirs of glory with him.

2. Even those who have some clearer notion of the nature and fruit of the seals of grace, yet are in a practical error, in that they look not with due diligence into themselves, inquiring after the efficiency of them in their hearts; do not study the life of Christ, to know more what it is, and then, to search into themselves for the truth and the growth of that life within them. Is it not an unbecoming thing, for a Christian (when he is about to appear before the Lord at his table, and so looks something more narrowly within) to find as little faith, as little divine affection, a heart as unmortified to the world, as cold towards Christ, as before his last address to the same table, after the intervening, possibly, of many months; in which time, had he been careful often to reflect inwards on his heart, and to look back upon that new sealing in his last participation, he might probably have been more conformable? And, truly, as there is much guiltiness cleaves to us in this, so, generally, much more in reference to this other sacrament that is here the Apostle's subject, *Baptism*, which being but once administered, and that in infancy, is very seldom and slightly considered by many, even real Christians. And so we are at a loss in that profit and comfort, that increase of both holiness and faith, which the frequent recollecting of it, after a spiritual manner, would no doubt advance us to. And not only do we neglect to put ourselves upon the thoughts of it in pri-

vate, but, in the frequent opportunities of such thoughts in public, we let it pass unregarded, are idle, inconsiderate, and so, truly guilty beholders. And the more frequently we have these opportunities, the less are we touched with them; they become common, and work not, and the slighting of them grows as common with us as the thing. Yea, when the engagement is more special and personal, when parents are to present their infants to this ordinance, (and then might, and certainly ought to have a more particular and fixed eye upon it, and themselves as being sealed with it, to ask within after the fruit and power of it, and to stir up themselves anew to the actings of faith, and to ambition after newness of life, and, with earnest prayer for their children, to be suitors for themselves, for further evidence of their interest in Christ;) yet possibly, many are not much engaged in these things even at such times, but are more busied to prepare their house for entertaining their friends, than to prepare their hearts for offering up their infant unto God to be sealed, and withal to make a new offer of their own hearts to him, to have renewed on them the inward seal of the covenant of grace, the outward seal whereof they did receive, as it is now to be conferred upon their infant.

Did we often look upon the face of our souls, the beholding of the many spots with which we have defiled them after our washing, might work us to shame and grief, and would drive us, by renewed application, to wash often in that blood which that water figures, which alone can fetch out the stain of sin; and then, it would put us upon renewed purposes of purity, to walk more carefully, to avoid the pollutions of the world we walk in, and to purge out the pollutions of the hearts that we carry about with us, which defile us more than all the world besides. It would work a holy disdain of sin, often to contemplate ourselves as washed in so precious a laver. Shall I, would the Christian say, considering that I am now cleansed in the precious blood of my Lord Jesus, run again into that puddle out of which he so graciously took me, and made me clean? Let the swine wallow in it; he hath made me of his sheepfold. He hath made me of that excellent order for which all are consecrated by that washing, who partake of it: *He hath*

washed us in his blood, and made us kings and priests unto God the Father. Am I of these, and shall I debase myself to the vile pleasures of sin? No, I will think myself too good to serve any sinful lusts: seeing that he hath looked on me, and taken me up, and washed and dignified me, and that I am wholly his, all my study and business shall be, to honor and magnify him.

LEIGHTON.

Baptism of itself Sanctifieth not.

ALTHOUGH Baptism be a sacrament to be received and honorably used of all men, yet it sanctifieth no man. And such as attribute the remission of sins unto the external sign, do offend. John (Matt. iii.) preached penitence in the desert, and remission of sin in Christ. Such as confessed their faults he marked and declared them to be of Christ's church. So that external baptism was but an inauguration or external consecration of those that first believed, and were cleansed of their sin, as he declareth himself in the same place: *I*, saith he, *baptise with water*; as though he said, 'My baptism maketh no man the better; inwardly, it changeth no man: but I call and preach to the outward ear; I exhort unto *repentance*. And such as say they do repent, and would change their old sinful life, *I wash with water*. *He* that inwardly cleanseth is *stronger than I*. His grace it is only that purifieth the soul. *I baptise unto repentance*; that is to say, into a new life.'

This new life cometh not until such time as Christ be known and received. Now to *put on Christ*, is to live a new life. Such, as be baptised, must remember that repentance and faith precede this external sign, and in Christ the purgation was inwardly obtained, before the external sign was given. So that there are two kinds of baptism, and both necessary. The one interior, which is the cleansing of the heart, the drawing of the Father, the operation of the Holy Ghost: and this baptism is in man, when he believeth and trusteth that Christ is the only actor of his salvation.

Thus be the infants examined concerning repentance and faith, before they be baptised with water; at the contemplation of the which faith God purgeth the soul. Then is the exterior sign and deed not to purge the heart, but to confirm, manifest,

and open unto the world, that this child is God's.

And likewise, baptism with the repetition of the words is a very sacrament and sign, that the baptised creature should die from sin all his life, as Paul writeth, Rom. vi. Likewise no man should condemn nor neglect this exterior sign, for the commandment's sake: though it have no power to purge from sin, yet it confirmeth the purgation of sin, and the act of itself pleaseth God, because the receivers thereof obey the will of his commandment.

Like as the king's majesty, that now is, immediately after the death of his father, was the true and legitimate king of England, right heir unto the crown, and received his coronation, not to make himself thereby king, but to manifest that the kingdom appertained unto him before. He took the crown to confirm his right and title. Had all England said nay, and by force, contrary unto God's laws and man's laws, with an exterior ceremony and pomp, crowned any other man, he should have been an adulterous and wrong king, with all his solemnities and coronation. Though this ceremony confirm and manifest a king in his kingdom, yet it maketh not a king, but the laws of God and of the land that give by succession the right of the kingdom to the old king's first heir male in England and other realms. And the babe in the cradle hath as good a right and claim, and is as true a king in his cradle uncrowned, as his father was, though he reigned a crowned king forty years. And this right of the babe should be defended and manifested, not only by the ceremony of coronation, but with all obedience and true subjection.

So it is in the church of Christ: man is made the brother of Christ, and heir of eternal life by God's only mercy received by faith, before he receive any ceremony to confirm and manifest openly his right and title. He saith, he believeth in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and believeth (he saith) the remission of sin; he doth not only deny the devil, the world, and sin, but saith he will forsake him for ever, and serve his Master, the Lord of virtue, King of heaven and earth. Thus assured of God, and cleansed from sin in Christ, he hath the livery of God given unto him, *baptism*, the which no Christian should neglect; and yet not

attribute his sanctification unto the external sign. As the king's majesty may not attribute his right unto the crown, but unto God and unto his father, who hath not only given him grace to be born into the world; but also to govern as a king in the world; whose right and title the crown confirmeth and sheweth the same unto all the world. Whereas this right by God and natural succession precedeth the coronation, the ceremony availeth nothing. A traitor may receive the crown, and yet be true king nothing the more. So an hypocrite and infidel may receive the external sign of baptism, and yet be no Christian man any the more, as Simon Magus and others.

Sacraments must be used holily, and yet not to have the office of Christ added unto them. Solely it is his office to sanctify and purge from sin. I take nothing from the sacraments, but honor them and extol them in all things, as they be worthy; howbeit, not too much. I call a sacrament, a ceremony instituted in the law of God to this end, that it should be a testimony of God's promise unto all such as believe; and a sign of God's good will and favor towards us. As Paul saith, that Abraham received a *testimony, by which God testified that he was received into grace*, Rom. iv. And as the promise of God, the remission of sin, is received by faith, so must these sacraments that be signs, tokens, and testimonies of the promise, be received in faith. Thus by Christ we are sanctified only; and, as Peter saith, *the chosen people, a princely priesthood, a holy people, and peculiar nation, to declare the power of Him that hath called us from the darkness of error and sin into his wonderful light*. These words declare the manner how we are sanctified, and what our office is after we are sanctified: to preach the power of Him that hath called us from the darkness of sin: as it is written, *This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise*, Isa. xliii.: and likewise in chap. lxvi. The Prophets and Apostles do use many times this word, *annunciare*, for *laudare*, and *gratias agere*. So doth Paul, *Mortem Domini annunciabitis, donec veniat*;—ye shall shew the death of the Lord until he come, 1 Cor. xi.: i. e. ye shall celebrate the death of Christ with all praises and giving of thanks.

BP. HOOPER, (MARTYR.)

This outward *sign* doth neither give us the Spirit of God, neither yet grace, that is, the favor of God. For if through the washing in the water, the spirit of grace were given, then should it follow, that whosoever were baptised in water should receive this precious gift; but that is not so, wherefore I must needs conclude, that this outward sign, by any power or influence that it hath, bringeth not the Spirit or favor of God. That every man receiveth not this treasure in baptism, it is evident: for put the case, that a Jew or an infidel should say that he did believe, and believe not in deed, and upon his words were baptised in deed (for no man can judge what his heart is, but we must receive him unto baptism, if he confess our faith with his mouth, albeit, his heart be far from thence), this miscreant, now thus baptised, hath received this outward sign and sacrament, as well as the most faithful man believing. Howbeit, he neither receiveth the Spirit of God, neither yet any grace, but rather condemnation. Wherefore it is evident that the exterior sign giveth not this gift, which is also as certain in all other sacraments, yea, in the sacrament of the altar, which may be called a double sacrament. For it is not only a remembrance that the natural body of Christ was broken, and his blood shed for our redemption, as the Evangelists do testify, but also it is his spiritual body, which is the congregation of the faithful, as St. Paul testifieth, saying, *The bread which we break, is it not the partaking (that is to say, we that are partakers) of the body of Christ? For we (saith he), though we be many, yet are we one bread and one body*. But for all that,—the receiving of this sacrament giveth us not the Spirit of God, neither yet his favor: for the wicked receive it, as well as the good. Howbeit, that receiving is to their damnation. Wherefore it followeth, that the outward sign giveth no man any grace. Moreover, if the Spirit of God and his grace were bound unto the sacraments, then where the sacraments were ministered, there must the spirit of grace wait on; and where they were not ministered, should be neither spirit nor grace. But that is false, for Cornelius and all his household received the Holy Ghost, before they were baptised. In so much, that Peter said, *May any man forbid that these should be baptised with water, which have received the Holy Ghost*,

as well as we? And so he commanded them to be baptised, in the name of the Lord: here may we see, that as the Spirit of God lighteth where he will, neither is he bound to any thing. Yea, and this example doth well declare unto us, that the sacraments are given, to be an outward witness unto all the congregation of that grace, which is given before privately unto every man.

So, is baptism given before the congregation unto him, which before he receive it, hath either professed the religion of Christ, or else hath the word of promise, by the which promise he is known to be of the sensible congregation of Christ; and for this cause, when we baptise one, that is come unto the age of discretion, we ask of him, whether he believe: if he answer 'yea,' and desire baptism, then is he baptised, so that we require faith in him, before he be baptised (which is the gift of God, and cometh of grace), and so it is an outward sign of his invisible faith, which before was given him of God. If an infant be brought unto baptism, whom his friends offer up willingly, to sanctify and fulfil the commandment and ordinance of God, we inquire of his friends before the congregation, whether they will that their child be baptised: and when they have answered, yea, then receiveth he baptism. Here also went before the promise of God, that he of his grace reputeth our infants no less of the congregation, than the infants of the Hebrews, and through baptism doth the congregation receive him, which was first received through grace of the promise. Thus may we see, that baptism bringeth not grace, but doth testify unto the congregation, that he, which is baptised, had such grace given him before: so is baptism a sacrament, that is, the sign of an holy thing, even a token of the grace and free mercy, which was before given him; a visible example of invisible grace, which is done and given through the gentleness of God. . . . The children of Israel were a people, whom God had chosen from among all nations of the world, and gave them circumcision for a token and memorial of that election; which circumcision was a figure of our baptism: and they thought, that the Gentiles, which were not carnally circumcised, had been all condemned. But their opinion deceived them; for there were also of the Gentiles, which, although they were not circumcised out-

wardly, were elect of God, and were spiritually circumcised, which only is the thing that God regardeth: as Paul testifieth, saying, *He is not a Jew, which is a Jew outward; neither is that circumcision any thing, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is hid within the circumcision of the heart.* (Which is the cutting-off of carnal desires, and is the true circumcision.) This circumcision was in price with God, with the which the Gentiles, as Job, were circumcised. And in like manner, may we say of our baptism, he is not a Christian man, which is washed with water, neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh: but that is the very baptism, which God alloweth, to be baptised spiritually in the heart, that is, to subdue and weed out the branches of sin, that it reign not in your mortal bodies, and bring them into bondage under it: of the which our baptism is but a sign. And there are many, I doubt not, which are thus spiritually baptised, although their bodies touch no water, as there were Gentiles thus spiritually circumcised, and yet never cut of their foreskin.

JOHN FRITH, (MARTYR.)

Reasons for Infant Baptism.

THERE is one thing that, I think, ought not to be omitted here, seeing it is of very great moment to our consolation: namely, that baptism is, by the will of God, to be administered not only to adult believers, but also to their children. The grounds for this, and those beyond all exceptions, are to be met with in Scripture: so that there is no necessity, with the Papists, who shamefully prevaricate in a good cause, to have recourse in this matter to unwritten tradition.

We readily acknowledge, that there is no express and special command of God, or of Christ, concerning infant-baptism: yet there are general commands, from which this special command is deduced by evident consequence. For to begin with what is most general; God declared to Abraham, that it was his constant and unchangeable will, that the sign of the covenant should not be denied to those in covenant with him, when he said, *And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant*, Gen. xvii. 13. By these words, he commands the sign of his covenant to be in the flesh of all the posterity of Abraham, with which he had entered

into a covenant of grace. From this general injunction, he infers, ver. 14. the necessity of circumcision, because he then gave it as a sign of the covenant. When therefore, upon the change of the economy, he substituted, in the place of circumcision, another sign of the covenant, in consequence of that general command, all those in covenant are bound to take upon them the new sign. Moreover, believers under the New Testament belong to the spiritual posterity of Abraham, and are, if we consider its substance, partakers of the same gracious covenant, Rom. iv. 16, 17. not adults only, but also their children, as we shall presently show. Whence it follows, that the sign of the covenant in their body, is not to be denied to the young children of believers, any more than to believers themselves.

There is another command of Christ, *Go ye therefore, and disciple all nations, baptising them, &c.* Matt. xxviii. 19. There Christ commands disciples to be gathered into his school, and sealed, as persons in covenant with him, with the seal of baptism. But it is evident, when parents become the disciples of Christ, their children are also accounted in the number of disciples. Just as among the Jews, together with the proselyte parents, their young children were initiated in the Jewish rites. It was not therefore necessary, that Christ should expressly mention the baptism of infants. For, as it was a received custom among the Jews, that, together with the parents, who gave up their names to the God of Israel, their young children should be baptised (as we have shown above), the Apostles being sent to baptise the nations, and accustomed to the rites of their own country, could not but think, that together with the parents, who made a profession of the faith of Christ, they ought to baptise their infants, unless Christ had repealed the received custom by a contrary command. Which as we no where read he did, we are absolutely to conclude, that what we have now explained was our Lord's intention.

Peter supplies us with another argument, *Be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, &c.* Acts ii. 38, 39. Where the Apostle argues thus: they to whom the promise of grace was

made, are to be baptised, we subsume; but the promise of grace was made not only to parents, but also to their children: it therefore follows, that not only parents, but also their children are to be baptised. Both propositions are the Apostle Peter's. Now the whole difficulty consists in this; who are we here to understand by the children, who partake of the promise of grace: whether adults only actually called, who are capable of making a profession of their faith; or also younger children and infants? The orthodox justly affirm the last: not only because mention simply is made of children, without distinction of age; but also because God expressly promised to Abraham to be the God of his seed, which he applies to an infant eight days old, Gen. xvii. 7, 12. We add, as that Christ permitted *little children* to come to him, laid his hands upon them, and declared that of such was the kingdom of Heaven, Matt. xvi. 13-15. But whom Matthew calls *παῖδες*, *little children*, Luke, xviii. 15. calls *βρέφη*, *infants*; which word, according to Eustathius, properly signifies *a new-born child at the breast*. Hence also Peter says, *ὡς ἀπριγέννητα βρέφη*, *as new-born babes*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. And here it appears we are, by all means, to keep to the propriety of the terms, both in the noun *βρέφος*, and the verb *προσφέρειν*; *προσέφερον δὲ αὐτῷ τὰ βρέφη*, *and they brought unto him also infants*: they appear to have been carried in arms. It is therefore evident, that to infants are also made the promises of grace and salvation.

Let the fourth argument stand thus: It is unjustifiable to exclude from baptism those who are made partakers of the Holy Spirit: for thus Peter, *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?* Acts x. 47. True indeed it is, that the Holy Spirit discovered himself in those of whom Peter there speaks, by some extraordinary gifts, which of themselves were not saving: yet the principal argument for the right to baptism cannot be drawn from hence. The Apostle therefore considers those extraordinary gifts as the effects of the sanctifying Spirit, bestowed on all the elect; and as special indications of the divine bounty towards them, whereby the truth of the Gospel was sealed in them, and the sincerity of their faith adorned: compare Gal. iii. 2. and

thence, as from the thing signified, he argues to the participation of the sign. We moreover subsume: even the children of believers have received the Holy Spirit; for otherwise they could neither be *holy*, which yet Paul declares them to be, 1 Cor. vii. 14. nor be *Christ's*, to whom none belongs, who has not his Spirit, Rom. viii. 9. nor see the kingdom of Heaven, to which none is admitted, but he who is born of water and of the Spirit, John iii. 5. Whence it follows, that water cannot be forbid, that infants should not be baptised.

Fifthly, They who belong to the church of God, have a right to baptism. The reason is, because baptism is the sign of association with, and seal of initiation into the church: *they were baptised; and the same day there were added* (namely, to the church,) *about three thousand souls*, Acts ii. 41. And then it is represented as the privilege of the whole church, that she is *cleansed by Christ with the washing of water by the word*, Eph. v. 26. But that infants belong to the church, appears from this, that when God commanded his church to be gathered together, he did not suffer their *little ones, and those that sucked the breasts, to be absent*, Deut. xxix. 10, 11. Joel ii. 16; and protests that *they were born unto him*, Ezek. xvi. 20.

Sixthly, We argue from this, that baptism has succeeded in the room of circumcision. The Apostle declares this, Col. ii. 11, 12. where he proves the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and especially of circumcision, with respect to believers of the New Testament, from this consideration, that the spiritual thing formerly signified and sealed by circumcision, is now signified and sealed by baptism; intimating, that what circumcision was to the Old Testament church, the same now is baptism to the New, and indeed in a far more eminent and perfect manner, because baptism is an introduction at once into the liberty and grace of the New Testament, whereas circumcision contained the profession of a bondage and yoke. But it is evident, that circumcision was administered to infants; it therefore follows, that we are to have the same sentiment concerning baptism. And indeed nothing can be advanced against the baptism of infants, which may not equally militate against their circumcision.

Here certainly appears the extraordinary

love of our God, in that as soon as we are born, and just as we come from our mother, he hath commanded us to be solemnly brought from her bosom, as it were into his own arms, that he should bestow upon us, in the very cradle, the tokens of our dignity and future kingdom; that he should put that song in our mouth, *thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breast: I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly*, Psal. xxii. 9, 10. that, in a word, he should join us to himself in the most solemn covenant from our most tender years: the remembrance of which, as it is glorious and full of consolation to us, so in like manner it tends to promote Christian virtues, and the strictest holiness, through the whole course of our lives.

Nothing ought to be dearer to us than to keep sacred and inviolable that covenant of our youth, that first and most solemn engagement that was made to God in our name. Nor is it any objection, that we were first bound in that covenant without our knowledge. For, no adult person, when he is informed of the excellency of that holy sacrament, which was bestowed in infancy, can be offended, that, according to the will of God, he was devoted so early by his pious parents to the supreme Being; unless, at the same time, he is resolved to renounce entirely the name of a Christian, and all his hopes of eternal salvation.

It cannot also fail to be very delightful to godly parents, to present to God and his Christ, their dearest pledges just began to enjoy the light, and consecrated in the water of the mystical font, or, as Dionysius the Pseudareopagite elegantly expressed it, "in the divine symbols of a divine birth," and recommended to the grace of God by the prayer of the whole church. Let this be the first care of their piety. Gregory Nazianzen, Orat. 40. *in sanctum baptisma*, speaks as follows: "Hast thou a child? give not time to vice to gain upon him: let him be sanctified from a child, and consecrated to the Spirit from his tender years." And certainly if no other benefit accrued from infant-baptism, every prudent person will own it to be very great, that it lays the most inviolable necessity on parents, carefully to train up their children, which they have so early devoted to God, in the mysteries of the Christian

religion, and the practice of true piety, both by instruction, admonition and good example. "They incur the guilt of an impious robber or thief," as Bucer has gravely observed, *de Regno Christi*, lib. ii. c. 9. "who are not at the greatest pains to bring up and form those they have consecrated by baptism to the Lord Christ, to the obedience of Christ. For by this neglect, as much as in them lies, they again rob God of the children they gave up to him, betray and enslave them to the devil."

WITSIUS.

Note here, that the fathers made a league with God, not only for themselves, but also for their posterity, as God again, for his part, promised them, that he would be the God, not only of them, but also of their seed and posterity; wherefore it was lawful for them to circumcise their children, being yet infants. And in like manner it is lawful for us to baptise our little ones being yet infants, for as much also as they are comprehended in the league. For they which have now the thing itself, there is nothing that can let, but that they may receive the sign. It is manifestly written in the twenty-ninth chapter of Deuteronomy, that the league was made not only with them which were present, but also with them which were absent and not yet born.

PETER MARTYR.

Concerning young children, because their faith is unknown to us, it is requisite that they be partakers of the fruits of the sacraments; and it is not very likely that they have faith, because they have not the use of understanding, except God do work in them extraordinarily, the which appeareth not to us. Nevertheless we cease not to communicate to them baptism. First, for as much as there is now the same cause in baptism which was some time in circumcision, which is called by St. Paul, *the seal of righteousness which is by faith*, Rom. iv. 11; and also by express commandment of God *the male children were marked the eighth day*, Gen. xvii. 12. Secondly; there is a special regard to be had to the infants of the faithful; for although they have not faith in effect, such as those have that be of age, yet so it is that they have the seed and the spring, in virtue of the promise, which was received and apprehended by the el-

ders. For God promiseth not us only to be our God, if we believe in him; but also that he will be the God of our offspring and seed, yea, unto a thousand degrees; that is, to the last end. Therefore said St. Paul, that the children of the faithful be *sanctified from their mother's womb*. By what right or title then do they refuse to give them the mark and ratification of that thing which they have and possess already?

And if they allege yet further, that although they come of faithful elders or parents, it followeth not that they be of the number of the elect, and by consequent, that they be sanctified, (for God hath not chosen all the children of Abraham and Isaac;) the answer is easy to be made, that it is true all those be not of the kingdom of God, which be born of faithful parents; but of good right we leave this secret to God for to judge, which only knoweth it: yet notwithstanding we presume justly to be the children of God, all those which be issued and descended from faithful parents according to the promise, for as much as it appeareth not to us the contrary. According to the same we baptise the young children of the faithful, as they have used and done from the Apostles' times in the church of God; and we doubt not but God, by this mark, (joined with the prayers of the church which is their assistant,) doth seal the adoption and election in those which he hath predestinated eternally, whether they die before they come to age of discretion, or whether they live to bring forth fruits of their faith in due time, and according to the means which God hath ordained.

BEZA.

The place alleged of the Anabaptists is in the Acts, where the Eunuch was not permitted to be baptised before confession made of his faith.

The answer is made thus: that that was done to the eunuch, must not be drawn to the infants of Christians, rashly to keep them from baptism, which only is to be observed in strangers to religion, and those that are of full age; for we affirm, that such as are strangers from the church of Christ (as sometimes were the Jews and Gentiles, and as are at this day the Jews and Turks, and other such like,) ought not to be baptised until they have made profession of their faith. But the reason of

infants born of Christians, is of a far other sort and use; for they are accounted among the children and household of the church, by reason of the law of covenant. They be holy, and Christ commandeth them to be brought unto him. It is manifest they please God, because their angels always see the face of the Father.

And although our capacity cannot conceive their state and condition, yet Christ testifieth they have faith; and that they have the Holy Ghost, the examples of John Baptist and others teach us.

GUALTER.*

Necessity of regarding the Spiritual Nature of the Ordinances of God.

WERE it possible to persuade you, I would recommend one thing to you: learn to look on the ordinances of God suitably to their nature, spiritually, and inquire after the spiritual effect and working of them upon your consciences. We would willingly have all religion reduced to externals; this is our natural choice; and we would pay all in this coin, as cheaper and easier by far, and would compound for the spiritual part, rather to add and give more external performance and ceremony. Hence, the natural complacency in Popery, which is all for this service of the flesh and body-services; and to those prescribed by God, will deal so liberally with Him in that kind, as to add more, and frame new devices and rites, what you will in this kind, sprinklings, and washings, and anointings, and incense. But whither tends all this? Is it not a gross mistaking of God, to think Him thus pleased? Or, is it not a direct affront, knowing that He is not pleased with these, but desires another thing, to thrust that upon Him which He cares not for, and refuse Him what He calls for?—that single, humble heart-worship and walking with Him, that purity of spirit and conscience which only He prizes; no outward service being acceptable, but for these, as they tend to this end and do attain it. Give me, saith He, nothing, if you give not this. Oh! saith the carnal mind, any thing but this thou shalt have; as many washings and offerings as thou wilt, *thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of*

oil; yea, rather than fail, let the fruit of my body go for the sin of my soul, Mic. vi. 6. Thus we: will the outward use of the word and sacraments do it? then, all shall be well. Baptised we are; and shall I hear much and communicate often, if I can reach it? Shall I be exact in point of family-worship? Shall I pray in secret? All this I do, or at least I now promise. Aye, but when all that is done, there is yet one thing may be wanting; and if it be so, all that amounts to nothing. Is thy conscience purified and made good by all these; or art thou seeking and aiming at this, by the use of all means? Then certainly thou shalt find life in them. But does thy heart still remain uncleansed from the old ways, not purified from the pollutions of the world? Do thy beloved sins still lodge with thee, and keep possession of thy heart? Then art thou still a stranger to Christ, and an enemy to God. The word and seals of life are dead to thee, and thou art still dead in the use of them all. Know you not, that many have made shipwreck upon the very rock of salvation? that many who were baptised as well as you, and as constant attendants on all the worship and ordinances of God as you, yet have remained without Christ, and died in their sins, and are now past recovery? Oh that you would be warned! There are still multitudes running headlong that same course, tending to destruction, through the midst of all the means of salvation; the saddest way of all to it, through word and sacraments, and all heavenly ordinances, to be walking hell-wards! Christians, and yet no Christians; baptised, and yet unbaptised! As the Prophet takes in the profane multitude of God's own people with the nations, *Egypt, and Judah, and Edom; all these nations are uncircumcised*; and the worst came last; *and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart*, Jer. ix. 26, thus, thus, the most of us are unbaptised in the heart. And as this is the way of personal destruction, so it is that, as the Prophet there declares, which brings upon the Church so many public judgments; and as the Apostle tells the Corinthians, that for the abuse of the Lord's table, *many were sick, and many slept*, 1 Cor. xi. 30. Certainly, our abuse of the holy things of God, and want of their proper spiritual fruits, are amongst the prime sins of this land, for

* For this, and the two preceding passages, see Marbeck's Common Places.

which so many slain have fallen in the fields by the sword, and in the streets by pestilence; and more are likely yet to fall, if we thus continue to provoke the Lord to his face. For it is the most avowed direct affront to profane his holy things; and this we do while we answer not their proper end, and are not inwardly sanctified by them. We have no other word, nor other sacraments, to recommend to you, than those which you have used so long to no purpose; only we would call you from the dead forms, to seek the living power of them, that you perish not.

You think the *renouncing of baptism* a horrible word, and that we would speak so only of witches; yet it is a common guiltiness that cleaves to all who renounce not the filthy lusts and the self-will of their own hearts. For baptism carries in

it a renouncing of these; and so the cleaving unto these is a renouncing of it. Oh! we all were sealed for God in baptism; but who lives as if it was so? How few have the impression of it on the conscience, and the expression of it in the walk and fruit of their life! We do not, as clean-washed persons, abhor and fly all pollutions, *all fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.*

We have been a long time hearers of the Gospel, whereof baptism is the seal, and most of us often at the Lord's table. What hath all this done upon us? Ask within: are your hearts changed? Is there a new creation there? Where is that spiritual-mindedness? Are your hearts dead to the world and sin, and alive to God, *your consciences purged from dead works?* LEIGHTON.

SECTION XI.—ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

This Sacrament instituted by Christ.

YOU all do know that things are more esteemed sometimes for the dignity and authority of the person, sometimes for the wisdom of the person, sometimes for the power and magnificence of the person, and sometimes for the tender love and kindness of the person. If need were, I could by examples set forth every one of these; but I hope it is not necessary. Now then, how can the thing, which we be about to celebrate, but be esteemed of every one highly, in that the Author of it doth want no dignity, no authority, no wisdom, no power, no magnificence, no holiness, no tender love and kindness; but hath all dignity, authority, wisdom, power, magnificence, holiness, tender love, mercy, glory, and all that can be wished absolutely? He is God eternal, co-equal, and substantial with the Father, and with the Holy Ghost, the image of the substance of God, the wisdom of the Father, the *brightness of his glory*, by whom all things were made, are ruled, and governed. He is the King of all kings, and the Lord of all lords. He is the Messiah of the world, our most dear and loving Brother, Saviour, Mediator, Advocate, Intercessor, Husband, Priest. So that the thing which cometh from him cannot but be esteemed, loved, and embraced, if dignity, authority,

ANTH.

wisdom, power, glory, goodness, and mercy like us; yea, if any thing that can be wished like us, then cannot this which our Lord did institute, but like us, and that so much the more, by how much it is one of the last things which he did institute and command. God open our eyes to see these things accordingly, so shall we come with more reverence to this table of the Lord! which thing he grant for his mercy's sake! Amen.

JOHN BRADFORD, (MARTYR.)

The Efficacy of the Lord's Supper.

THE Sacrament of the Lord's Supper directs us to the cross of Jesus Christ. We are not made partakers of Jesus Christ, nor feed upon him worthily and profitably, but in as far as we believe that he was crucified for us, and that we can appropriate to ourselves the power of his death, under a lively sense of our misery. These words must be true, and cannot deceive us: *Take, eat and drink. This is my body, which is given for you. This is my blood, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins.* By bidding us to take, he assures us that he is ours; and by ordering us to eat and to drink, he gives us clearly to understand, that he is of the same substance with us.

The principal efficacy of the Lord's Supper consists in these words, *which is*

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given for you; which is shed for you. For otherwise, we should not derive much benefit from the body and the blood of Jesus Christ being now administered unto us, if they had not once been offered for our redemption.

All men confess that Jesus Christ is the Bread of life, by which believers are nourished to everlasting salvation: but they differ in their attempts to explain it. For some will decide the matter in a few words, by saying, that to eat the flesh of Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, is nothing else than to believe in him. But it appears to me, that our blessed Saviour, in this ever-memorable discourse, in which he recommends to us the eating of his flesh, intended to teach us something far more sublime and exalted; namely, that we are quickened by the real participation of himself, which he signified by the terms, 'to eat and to drink;' lest any one should imagine, that it consisted in nothing but mere knowledge. For as our body is nourished, not by looking on the bread, but by eating it; so our soul must truly and inwardly partake of Jesus Christ, that by his virtue, it may grow up unto spiritual life. The Lord, by calling himself, *the Bread of Life*, intended not merely to teach us, that our salvation consists in the faith of his death and resurrection; but he would likewise by the true communion which we have with him, transfer his life into us, and become ours. Those therefore give me as little satisfaction, who indeed allow that we have some fellowship with Jesus Christ; but, when they show us wherein this fellowship consists, declare that it is in the participation of his Spirit only, without making any mention of his flesh and blood; as if these words of our Lord, *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed: Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you; with many more relating to this subject*, were spoken to no purpose.

But how can any man venture to explain by words so deep a mystery, which I freely acknowledge exceeds all the powers of my mind, even to conceive? This I must confess, lest any one should measure the sublimity of it by my poor expressions, which fall infinitely short of its grandeur. Whenever I am to speak on this subject, after I have attempted to say every thing in my power, I am well aware that I have

said far too little, considering the dignity of the subject. Nothing therefore remains, but to be enraptured with this mystery, which neither the mind is capable of conceiving, nor the tongue of expressing.

Jesus Christ has imparted to his flesh an enlivening virtue, that we, by partaking of it, might be nourished unto immortality. *I am*, said he, *the living Bread, which came down from heaven: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*, John vi. 51. By these words he declares, that he is *the Life*, not as the eternal Word only who came down from heaven; but also because by descending, he has communicated this virtue to the flesh he assumed, that the participation of life might come even unto us. His flesh is *meat indeed*, and his blood is *drink indeed*, John vi. 55. From this consideration the godly derive this great comfort, that we now obtain life, by his having assumed flesh of our flesh.

Now, who does not see, that the communion of the body and the blood of Jesus Christ is necessary to all those who aspire to a heavenly life? To this, the following passages in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians have a reference: *And gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body*, ch. i. 22, 23; *the whole body being fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth*, ch. iv. 15, 16. All this, we understand, cannot be otherwise effected, unless He be wholly united with us, both in body and in spirit. But the Apostle has extolled this most intimate communion, by which we are united with the body of Christ, still much higher, when he says, *We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, ch. v. 30. Finally, in order to signify that it exceeds every possible expression, he concludes his discourse with the exclamation, *This is a great mystery!* vers. 32.

Jesus Christ testifies and seals to us in the Holy Communion this sacred participation of his body and of his blood, by which he diffuses his life into us in the same manner as if he penetrated our joints and marrow; and this, not by presenting us with an empty and vain sign, but by displaying the efficacy of his Spirit, to accomplish that which he has promised. Hence the Apostle says, that *the bread which we break, is the communion of the body of Christ; and the cup of blessing which we*

bless, is the communion of the blood of Christ, 1 Cor. x. 16. It ought not to be opposed to us, that this is a figurative way of speaking, by which the name of the thing signified is attributed to the sign. We should certainly believe, that, by taking the symbol of the body of Jesus Christ, we at the same time receive the body itself. I therefore declare, that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ is verily and indeed exhibited to us under the signs of bread and wine, and consequently, his body and his blood, in which he has fulfilled all righteousness, to procure us salvation.

I willingly receive all that can serve to express properly the true communion which Jesus Christ imparts unto us of his body and of his blood in the Holy Supper; to express it in such a manner, that we may acknowledge, that it is neither by imagination, nor in thought only, we receive it, but that we enjoy the substance itself. I here embrace the truth of God in which he bids me to take and eat his body, and to drink his blood, under the signs of bread and wine. I doubt not, that he indeed offers it, and that I receive it from his hand.

Such is the presence of the body of Jesus Christ, which the nature of the sacrament requires. We believe and confess, that it exerts such virtue and efficacy, as not merely to replenish our souls with a firm assurance of everlasting life, but to assure us also of the immortality of our body; because, even here, it is quickened by his immortal flesh, and participates, in some manner, of his immortality.

CALVIN.

Of all natural unions there is no one so intimate, universal, and indissoluble, as that of the human body with the food which nourishes it. This is a beautiful representation of that real union which takes place between Jesus Christ and us, in the blessed and holy communion. We are then enabled to say, *Thou art mine; thou art in me; thou art my salvation, my strength, and my life*. So intimate is this union, that it penetrates the very soul, making Christ and the Christian one. *I live: yet not I: but Christ liveth in me*.

This union is universal. The mind, the heart, and all the affections feel the efficacy of the life of Christ. He is our light, our food, our life, our support. This union is inseparable; the cruelty of tyrants, so

ingenious in inventing means of separating the soul from the body, would be foiled in attempting to separate the food from the body after it has been received, and converted into our nature. Much less is it able to separate Jesus from the believing soul, which has once really received him by grace and faith, and has been quickened by the bread of life.

Christ gives himself to us in the Holy Communion, not as common food, but as a sacred victim offered for us in sacrifice. Here we discover the reason why he mentions *his body broken, given, or delivered, for us*. And on this account we break the bread, 1 Cor. x. 16. that we may thus represent his death to ourselves, under the type of a sacrifice, in which the victim was broken and cut in pieces. For this end he further says, that *his blood is shed*, because the effusion of blood was an important part of the oblation. The law of Moses declares, that *it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul*, Lev. xvii. 11. and according to St. Paul, Heb. ix. 22. *without shedding of blood is no remission*. In this manner Jesus presents himself to us as a bleeding victim. O God! what a victim does his love offer up for our salvation! what infinitely precious blood flows for sinners! Without this oblation, vain were all the sacrifices of old. Without this precious blood, vain would be the blood of all beasts, nay the blood even of all men. Behold; here is the expiatory Victim, so often prefigured and promised, and so long expected. *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!* John i. 29. *The Lamb slain, Christ, the true Passover, sacrificed for us!* 1 Cor. v. 7. I behold this Paschal Lamb not merely destined for the altar, but actually sacrificed: the stroke of death hath assailed it; it hath fallen under the slaughtering knife; its blood hath stained the earth, and satisfied the demand of eternal justice.

The Sacrament is an admirable representation of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and of his having fully expiated sin, and obtained eternal redemption for us. But how is this obtained? We are enjoined to eat the flesh, and drink the blood, of this expiating Victim: but both these were prohibited by the law, as a proof and sign, that the expiation of sin was not yet made, that all the atoning sacrifices were imperfect, and that sinners

still remained defiled, alienated from God, and incapable of being admitted to his fellowship. It is certain, that the blood was reserved for the altar, to make atonement for the soul, and that it was not lawful for any one to taste it. It is also certain, that in the propitiatory sacrifices, the people were not permitted to eat of the offerings for sin, and that the priests only had this right and privilege. Again, the priest himself, who was privileged to eat of the sin-offering sacrificed for another person, had not liberty to do it, when the offering for sin was made for his own person, to atone for his own transgressions, nor when an offering was made for the whole congregation, because he was himself a part of it. All these things are proofs of the insufficiency of the sacrifices made of old, which were incapable of affording to the soul of the sinner true food, solid comfort, and real assurance of the expiation of sin, and his reconciliation with God. But things are now entirely changed. We all eat of our Sacrifice. What was prohibited formerly, is now enjoined. *Take, eat: this is my body, broken for you. Drink ye all of this cup: for it is my blood, the blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins.*

Rejoice, O my soul! as often as thou approachest to this feast! Had not the sacrifice been previously made, thou wouldst not be admitted to this feast. Had not thy sin been completely expiated, thou couldst not partake of this mystic repast of the flesh of the propitiatory sacrifice! Take, and eat: and so thou shalt prove the virtue of this divine Sacrifice by the salvation and life which it brings with it. My Saviour, out of love, has prepared this meat and drink for me, of which I stood in need. He is himself the bread of life, the bread which came down from heaven; and he presents himself unto me under the symbols of bread and wine in the Holy Communion, in order to assure me, He will himself be my food unto eternal life.

SUPERVILLE.

Let us come to this ordinance with raised expectations. The same faith that enlargeth the desire, and draws out that to a holy vehemence, should also elevate the hope, and ripen that to a holy confidence. When we come thirsting to these waters, we need not fear that they will prove like

the brooks in summer, which disappoint the weary traveller; for *when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place*, Job vi. 15, &c. Such are all the broken cisterns of the creature; they perform not what they promise, or rather what we foolishly promise to ourselves from them. No, but these are inexhaustible *fountains of living water*, in which there is enough for all, though never so many; enough for each, though never so needy; enough for me, though most unworthy.

Come, my soul, what dost thou look for at the table of the Lord? The Maker of the feast is God himself, who doth nothing little, nothing mean, but *is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we are able to ask or think*. When he gives, he gives like himself, gives like a king, gives like a God, *all things richly to enjoy*, considering not what it becomes such ungrateful wretches as we are to receive, but what it becomes such a bountiful Benefactor as he is to give. A lively faith may expect that which is rich and great from Him that is possessor of heaven and earth, and all the wealth of both; and that which is kind and gracious from Him that is the *Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation*. A lively faith may expect all that is purchased by the blood of Christ from a God who is *righteous in all his ways*, and all that is promised in the new covenant from a God who *cannot lie*, nor deceive.

The provision in this feast is Christ himself, and all his benefits, all we need to save us from being miserable, and all we can desire to mak us happy; and glorious things, no doubt, may be expected with him, *in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell*. Let our expectations be built upon a right foundation, not any merit of our own at God's mercy and Christ's mediation, and then build large, as large as the new covenant in its utmost extent; build high, as high as heaven in all its glory. Come, expecting to see that which is most illustrious, and to taste and receive that which is most precious; come, expecting that with which you will be abundantly satisfied.

Though what is prepared seems to a carnal eye poor and scanty, like the *five loaves set before five thousand men*, yet when Christ hath the *breaking of those loaves*, they shall *all eat and be filled*.

In this ordinance the oil is multiplied, the *oil of gladness*; it is multiplied in the pouring out, as the *widow's oil*, 2 Kings iv. 2, &c. Do as she did, therefore; bring *empty vessels*, bring not a few, they shall be filled; the expectations of faith shall all be answered; *the oil stays not* (as there, ver. 6,) while there is an empty vessel waiting to be filled; give faith and hope their full compass, and thou wilt find (as that widow did, ver. 7.) there is enough of this oil, this multiplied oil, this oil from *the good olive*, to pay thy debt, and enough beside for thee and thine to live upon. As we often wrong ourselves by expecting too much from the world, which is *vanity and vexation*, so we often wrong ourselves by expecting too little from God, whose mercy is upon us, according as we hope in him; and who in exerting his power, and conferring his gifts, still saith, *According to your faith be it unto you*. The king of Israel lost his advantage against the *Syrians* by *smiting thrice*, and *then staying*, when he *should have smitten five or six times*, 2 Kings xiii. 18, 19; and we do often in like manner prejudice ourselves, by the weakness of our faith; we receive little, because we expect little; and are like them among whom *Christ could not do many mighty works, because of their unbelief*, Mark vi. 5, 6.

MATT. HENRY.

The Necessity of coming to the Lord's Supper.

AFTER all this, it is advised by the guides of souls, wise men and pious, that all persons should communicate very often, even as often as they can without excuses or delays; every thing that puts us from so holy an employment, when we are moved to it, being either a sin, or an imperfection, an infirmity, or indevotion, and an inactiveness of spirit. All Christian people must come. They indeed that are in the state of sin must not come so, but yet they must come. First they must quit their state of death, and then partake of the bread of life. They that are at enmity with their neighbors, must come; that is no excuse for their not coming, only they must not bring their enmity along with them, but leave it, and then come. They that have variety of secular employments, must come; only they must leave their secular thoughts and affections behind them, and then come, and converse

with God. If any man be well-grown in grace, he must needs come, because he is excellently disposed to so holy a feast: but he that is but in the infancy of piety, had need to come, that so he may grow in grace. The strong must come, lest they become weak; and the weak, that they may become strong. The sick must come to be cured, the healthful to be preserved. They that have leisure must come, because they have no excuse; they that have no leisure must come hither, that by so excellent religion they may sanctify their business. The penitent sinners must come, that they may be justified; and they that are justified, that they may be justified still. They that have fears and great reverence to these 'mysteries, and think no preparation to be sufficient, must receive, that they may learn how to receive the more worthily: and they that have a less degree of reverence, must come often to have it heightened: that as those creatures that live amongst the snows of the mountains, turn white with their food and conversation with such perpetual whitenesses, so our souls may be transformed into the similitude and union with Christ by our perpetual feeding on him, and conversation, not only in his courts, but in his very heart, and most secret affections, and incomparable purities. BR. TAYLOR.

In what state of mind we should come to the Lord's Supper.

LET us come to this ordinance with earnest desires towards God, and communion with him. It is a feast, a spiritual feast, and we must come to it with an appetite, a spiritual appetite: for the full soul loathes even the honey-comb, and slights the offer of it; but to the hungry soul, that is sensible of its own needs, every bitter thing is sweet, even the bitterness of repentance when it is in order to peace and pardon. Our desires towards the world and the flesh must be checked and moderated, and kept under the government of religion and right reason; for we have been too long spending our money for that which is not bread, and which is at the best unsatisfying; but our desires towards Christ must be quickened and stirred up. *As the hart*, the hunted hart, *panteth after the refreshment of the water-brook*, so earnestly must our *souls pant for the living God*, Ps. xlii. 1, 2.

The invitation is given and the promise made to them only that *hunger and thirst*; they are called to *come to the waters*, Isa. lv. 1.; to *come and drink*, John vii. 37; and it is promised to them *that they shall be filled*, Matt. v. 6. It is very necessary, therefore, that we work upon our hearts the consideration of those things that are proper to kindle this holy fire, and to blow up its sparks into a flame. We are then best prepared to receive temporal mercies, when we are most indifferent to them, and content, if the will of God be so, to be without them. *Did I desire a son of my Lord?* saith the good Shunamite, 2 Kings iv. 28. Here the danger is of being too earnest in our desires, as Rachael, *Give me children, or else I die*. But we are then best prepared to receive spiritual mercies, when we are most importunate for them: here the desires cannot be too vehement. In the former case, strong desires evidence the prevalency of sense, but in this they evidence the power of faith, both realising and valuing the blessings desired. The devout and pious soul *thirsts for God, for the living God, as a thirsty land*, Ps. cxliii. 6; lxiii. 1. *It longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the Lord*, and for communion with God in them, Ps. lxxxiv. 2. *It breaks for the longing it hath unto God's judgments at all times*, Ps. cxix. 20. Can our souls witness to such desires as these? O that I might have a more intimate acquaintance with God, and Christ, and divine things! O that I might have the tokens of God's favor and fuller assurances of his distinguishing love in Jesus Christ! O that my covenant interest in him, and relation to him, might be cleared up to me, and that I might have more of the comfort of it! O that I might partake more of the divine grace, and, by its effectual working on my soul, might be made more conformable to the divine will and likeness, more holy, humble, spiritual, heavenly, and more meet for the inheritance! O that I might have the earnest of the Spirit in my heart sealing me to the day of redemption!

Thus the desire of our souls must be towards the Lord, and towards the remembrance of his name. In this imperfect state, where we are at home in the body, and absent from the Lord, our love to God acts more in holy desires than in holy delights. It is rather love in motion, like a

bird upon the wing, than love at rest, like a bird upon the nest, Ps. lxxxiv. 3. All those who have the Lord for their God, agree to desire nothing more than God, for they know they have enough in him; but yet they still desire more and more of God; for till they come to heaven, they will never have enough of him. Come then, my soul, why art thou so cold in thy desires towards those things which are designed for thy peculiar satisfaction, distinct from the body? Why so eager for the meat that perisheth, and so indifferent to that which endures to everlasting life? Hast thou no desire to that which is so necessary to thy support, and without which thou art undone? no desire to that which will contribute so much to thy comfort, and yield thee an inexpressible satisfaction? Provision is made in the Lord's supper, of bread to strengthen thee; will not the sense of thine own weakness and emptiness make thee hunger after that? Canst thou be indifferent to that which is the staff of thy life? Provision is made of pleasant food, fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees; art thou not desirous of dainties, such dainties? Was the tree of knowledge such a temptation, because it was pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, that our first parents would break through the hedge of a divine command, and venture all that was dear to them to come at it? And shall not the tree of life, which we are not only allowed, but commanded to eat of, and the fruit of which will nourish us to life eternal, shall not that appear more pleasant in our eyes, and more to be desired? God, even thine own God, who hath wherewithal to supply all thy needs, and hath promised to be to thee a God all-sufficient, a God that is enough, he hath said it, *open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it*, Ps. lxxxi. 10. Thou art not straitened in him, be not straitened in thine own desires. **MATT. HENRY.**

I go to the sacrament for mercy, and strength to keep mercy; to profess my faith in Christ, that I have pardon and peace with God, life and righteousness only by his death and merits; and to own my obligation to live unto him that died for me, in faith, love, and self-dedication. I go to the sacrament for Christ's love and likeness, for the benefit and for the munition of the cross; to have the load of sin

taken from my heart, and any other which Christ thinks fit, laid on my back.

Was pardon, salvation, and life, received in the sacrament? Did I bid an eternal farewell to sin; and have I the poison of it expelled by the virtue of Christ's body and blood?

I go to the sacrament to leave sin behind me, and receive Christ instead of it; and if I do the one, laying my sins on Christ, with a will to forsake them, I am sure of the other. Lord, grant me thy peace, and all that comes with it, love, patience, resignation, thankfulness, deliverance from the fear of death, and a hearty longing for eternity.

I go to the sacrament for the pardon of sin, for the kindling of love, for the turning of my heart, for the renewal of my will.

I do not go to the Lord's table to give, but to receive; not to tell Christ how good I am, but to think how good he is. I have a great many sins and wants to tell him of, more than would take up the whole day; and when I have told him all that I know of myself, it is not the half, but a very little of what he knows of me. I bring myself, that is, sin, to him, believing that he will be all to me, and do all for me that is in his heart; and I know it is a very compassionate one. I go as a sinner to the Saviour. To whom else should I go, with my blind eyes, foul leprosy, hard heart, and rebellious will? You tell me I must have I know not how many graces and qualifications to go to the sacrament with; but I cannot stay for them; my wants are urgent; I am a dying man. My Lord, with his known kindness, says, *Come; Do this; Remember me.* His invitation is qualification enough; and I long to feed on him, to thank God for him, to take him into my heart. I will go to behold him crucified, and his blood poured out for me, in spite of all my sins and fears; and, though all the saints on earth stood up with one mouth to forbid me, I go to put myself under Christ's wings, and fly to him for refuge from the monster sin, ready to devour me.

I go to the sacrament to know God and myself; to wonder at the reconciliation of strict punishment with free pardon; to see the greatness of my sin, and the greatness of my hope, in the greatness of the sacrifice therein represented; to sin no more, because I believe there is no con-

demnation for my sin; to be raised as high as heaven, and humbled in the dust; to be astonished at the mystery of Christ crucified, and to profess that I know less of God than ever.

Let me be daily thinking of the sacrament, daily in a state of preparation for it, daily living on it, resolving to secure my portion in the love therein exhibited, by receiving it in faith and humility, as love and undeserved mercy, making it my pattern, and dreading the sin which could be expiated with no less a sacrifice.

Do this in remembrance of me. Remember who I am, and what thou art; remember me as thy Saviour; remember me as thy Master; remember my love; remember thy obligations; remember me as hating thy sin; remember me as bearing thy sin; remember me, and fear not; remember me, and sin not; remember me, to live for me, by me, with me.

REV. T. ADAM.

On the fear of eating and drinking damnation in partaking of the Lord's Supper.

OTHERS may dread the possibility of eating and drinking damnation unto themselves, in partaking of the Lord's Supper. This fear has agitated many sincere minds. It has arisen from the language of the Apostle; *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. But it is evident that the Apostle did not here mean eternal damnation, since he immediately adds, *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*, ver. 30. The temporal judgments of God then, as consequent upon a wilful abuse of the Lord's Supper, are clearly intended. Accordingly the word *damnation* here means, as it is given in the margin of our Bibles, judgment, which is indeed the Apostle's own explication, in verses 31, 32. *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world*; which undoubtedly means, that if we would examine ourselves we should not be punished. But when we are thus punished, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. The apprehension then of eating and drinking our own eternal damnation has no foundation whatever in this passage of

holy writ.* Every sin exposes to eternal death, and therefore this amongst the number; but *he that confesseth and forsaketh* this, supposing him indeed to have committed it, as well as any other transgression, shall most undoubtedly *find mercy*.

But still, the dread of *eating and drinking unworthily* may rest on the mind. If our fears on this head arise from an apprehension that we are not in a state deserving to partake of this holy sacrament, they spring entirely from an erroneous sentiment. No one in this view is worthy of receiving so great a blessing. But the expression of the Apostle refers to a suitable, fit, becoming state of mind in partaking of the Lord's Supper. This is evident from the interpretation which he himself gives: *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation unto himself, not discerning the Lord's body*; not perceiving by faith the body and blood of Christ, not distinguishing between the consecrated elements of his body and blood and ordinary food, and therefore not being in a state of mind suitable for the sacred service. Nor is this use of the word uncommon. A criminal who has forfeited his life to the laws of his country, is wholly unworthy of the kindness of a benevolent visitor; and yet if he listen to the admonitions of such an instructor with meekness and contrition, if he welcome the truth which is placed before him, and appear desirous to profit by it, he may properly be said to have received them worthily. Every notion of merit must be carefully excluded from our views of the Lord's Supper. *We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not for our own works and deservings*. Our worthiness for this holy communion is that meetness which consists in right ideas of the institution, humble renunciation of our own righteousness, earnest prayers for an interest in the atonement of Christ, and hearty desires to be devoted to his service. It is the fitness of a contrite sinner for receiving the memorials of the blessings of salvation.

REV. D. WILSON.

* A writer on this subject observes, 'It is very plain that the Corinthians were punished for their improper conduct in regard to the Lord's Supper. This the Apostle calls the fatherly correction of the Lord, to which he opposes the final condemnation of the world, from which Christians are exempted.' See 1 Cor. xi. 32.

Encouragement to the Timorous.

THINK not to say within yourselves, we are not clean, surely we are not clean, therefore we come not to the feast; if you are not, why are you not? Is there not a *fountain opened*? Have you not been many a time called to *wash you, and make you clean*? You are unready, and therefore you excuse yourselves from coming; but is not your unreadiness your sin? And will one sin justify you in another? Can a man's offence be his defence? You think you are not serious enough, nor devout enough, nor regular enough in your conversations to come to the sacrament: and perhaps you are not; but why are ye not? What hinders you? Is any more required to fit you for the sacrament than is necessary to fit you for heaven? And dare you live a day in that condition, in which, if you die, you will be rejected and excluded as unmeet for heaven? Be persuaded therefore to put on the *wedding garment*, and then come to the *wedding feast*. Instead of making your unreadiness an argument against coming to this ordinance, make the necessity of your coming to this ordinance, an argument against your unreadiness. Say not I am too light and airy, too much addicted to sport and pleasures, am linked too close in vain and carnal company, or plunged too deep in worldly care and business, and therefore I must be excused from attending this ordinance, for this is to make ill worse: but say rather, it is necessary I come to the Lord's Supper, and come in a right manner; my soul withers and languishes, dies and perishes if I do not, and therefore I must break off this vain and sensual course of life, which unfits me for, and indisposes me to that ordinance; therefore I must disentangle myself from that society, and disengage myself from that incumbrance, whatever it is, which cools pious affections, and quenches that coal. Shake off that, whatever it is, which comes between you and the comfort and benefit of this ordinance: dally no longer in a matter of such vast moment, but speedily come to that resolution, *Depart from me, ye evil doers*, and evil doings, *for I will keep the commandments of my God*, Ps. cxix. 115.

Let me address this exhortation to those whose desires are strong towards the Lord, and towards the remembrance of his

name in this ordinance; but they are timorous, and are kept from it by prevailing fears: this is the case of many who we hope *fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant*, but they *walk in darkness, and have no light*, Isa. l. 10, who follow Christ, but they follow him trembling. Ask them why they do not come to this sacrament, and they will tell you they dare not come, they are unworthy, they have no faith, no comfort in God, no hope in Heaven, and therefore if they should come, they should eat and drink judgment to themselves. They find not in themselves that fixedness of thought, that flame of pious and devout affections which they think should be, and because they cannot come as they should, they think it better to stay away. What is said for the conviction and terror of hypocrites and presumptuous sinners, notwithstanding our care to distinguish between the precious and the vile, they misapply to themselves, and so the heart of the righteous is made sad, which should not be made sad. We are commanded to *strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; to say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not*, Isa. xxxv. 3, 4. But wherewith shall we comfort such, whose souls many times refuse to be comforted? If we tell them of the infinite mercy and goodness of God, the merit and righteousness of Christ, the precious promises of the covenant, their jealous hearts reply, all this is nothing to them; the Lord they think has forsaken them, their God hath forgotten them, and *utterly separated them from his people; as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to those heavy hearts*, Prov. xxv. 20.

But, O ye of little faith, who thus doubt, would you not be made whole? Would not you be strengthened? Is it not a desirable thing to attain to such a peace and serenity of mind, as that you may come with a humble, holy boldness to this precious ordinance? . . .

It is certain we have reason to abase ourselves, for at the best we are unworthy to come. If we are *less than the least of God's mercies*, how much less are we than the greatest, than this, which includes all? We are unworthy of the *crumbs that fall from our Master's table*, much more unworthy of the *children's bread*, and the dainties that are upon the table. Being

invited, we may hope to be welcome; but what is there in us that we should be invited? . . .

Yet let us come to this ordinance with a gracious confidence, as children to a father, to a father's table, not with any confidence in ourselves, but in Christ only. That slavish fear which represents God as a hard master, rigorous in his demands, and extreme to mark what we do amiss, which straitens our spirits and subjects us to bondage and torment, must be put off and striven against, and we must *come boldly to the throne of grace*, to the table of grace, not as having any thing in ourselves to recommend us, but as having a *High-priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, Heb. iv. 15, 16. As a presumptuous rudeness is a provocation to the master of the feast, so a distrustful shyness is displeasing to him, which looks as if we questioned either the sincerity of the invitation, or the sufficiency of the provision.

This is the fault of many good Christians; they come to this sacrament rather like prisoners to the bar, than like friends and children to the table; they come trembling and astonished, and full of confusion. Their apprehensions of the grandeur of the ordinance, and the danger of coming unworthily, run into an extreme, and become a hindrance to the exercise of faith, hope and love: this extreme we should carefully watch against, because it tends so much to God's dishonor, our own prejudice, and the discouragement of others. Let us remember we have to do with One who is willing to make the best of sincere desires and serious endeavours, though in many things we be defective, and who deals with us in tender mercy, and not in strict justice; and who, though he be out of Christ *a consuming fire*, yet in Christ is a gracious Father: let us, therefore, *draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith*, Heb. x. 22. It is related of Titus the emperor, that when a poor petitioner presented his address to him with a trembling hand, he was much displeased, and asked him, 'Dost thou present thy petition to thy prince as if thou wert giving meat to a lion?' Chide thyself for these amazing fears; *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?* If the Spirit undertake to work all

my works in me, as the Son hath undertaken to work all my works for me, both the one and the other shall be done effectually. *Therefore hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him.* MATT. HENRY.

What is to be done in coming away from the Lord's Supper.

LET us inquire then, what is to be done at our coming away from the ordinance, for the preserving and improving of the impressions of it.

We should come from this ordinance admiring the condescensions of the divine grace to us. Great are the honors which have here been done us, and the favors which here we have been admitted to: the God that made us hath taken us into covenant and communion with himself: the King of kings hath entertained us at his table, and there we have been feasted with the dainties of heaven; abundantly satisfied with the goodness of his house: exceeding great and precious promises have here been sealed to us, and earnest given us of the eternal inheritance: now, if we know ourselves, this cannot but be the matter of our wonder, our joyful, and yet awful wonder. . . .

We should also come from this ordinance lamenting our own manifold defects and infirmities in our attendance upon God in it. When we look back upon the solemnity, we find that as we cannot speak well enough of God and of his grace, so we cannot speak ill enough of ourselves and of the folly and treachery of our own hearts. Now, conscience, thou art charged in God's name to do thine office, and to accomplish a diligent search; review the workings of the soul in this ordinance distinctly and impartially. . . .

O what reason have I to be ashamed of myself, and blush to lift up my face before God, when I review the frame of my heart during my attendance on this ordinance! How short have I come of doing my duty according as the work of the day required! My thoughts should have been fixed, and the subjects presented to them to fix upon were curious enough to engage them, and copious enough to employ them, and yet they went with the fool's eyes into the ends of the earth, and wandered after a thousand impertinencies. A little thing served to give them a diversion from the contemplation of the great things set before me. My

affections should have been raised and elevated, but they were low and flat, and little moved; if sometimes they seemed to soar upwards, yet they soon sunk down again, and the things which remained were ready to die. My desires were cold and indifferent, my faith weak and inactive, nor were there any workings of soul in me proportionable to the weightiness of the transaction. Through my own dulness and deadness and inadvertency, I lost a deal of time out of a little, and slipt much of that, which might have been done and got there, if I had been close and diligent.

This thought forbids us to entertain a good conceit of ourselves and our own performances, or to build any confidence upon our own merit. While we are conscious to ourselves of so much infirmity cleaving to our best services, we must acknowledge that boasting is for ever excluded; we have nothing to glory of before God, nor can we challenge a reward as of debt, but must ascribe all to free grace. What good there is in us, is all of God, and he must have the honor of it: but there is also much amiss, which is all of ourselves, and we must take the shame of it, lamenting those sad effects of the remainder of sin in us, which we feel to our loss when we draw nigh to God in holy ordinances.

This thought obligeth us likewise to rely on Christ alone for acceptance with God in all our religious duties: he is that great and gracious High-priest, *who bears the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel hallow in their holy gifts, that notwithstanding that iniquity, when it is repented of, the gifts may be accepted before the Lord*, Exod. xxviii. 38. *Of his righteousness, therefore, we must make mention, even of his only, for the most spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God only through him*, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

We should likewise come from this ordinance rejoicing in Jesus Christ, and in that great love wherewith he hath loved us. From this feast we should go to our tents, as the people went from Solomon's feast of dedication, *joyful and glad in heart, for all the goodness that the Lord hath done for David his servant, and for Israel his people*, 1 Kings viii. 66. They that *went forth weeping must come back rejoicing*, as they have cause, if they *bring their sheaves with them*, Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.

Hath God here lifted up the light of his countenance upon us? That should *put gladness into our hearts*, Ps. iv. 6, 7. Have we here lifted up our souls to God, and joined ourselves to him in an everlasting covenant? We have reason with the baptised eunuch to *go on our way rejoicing*, Acts viii. 39; the *day of our espousals* should be the *day of the gladness of our hearts*, Cant. iii. 11. This cup of blessing was designed to be a cup of consolation, and its wine ordained to make glad man's heart, to make glad the heart of the new man: having therefore drunk of this cup, let our souls make their boast in the Lord, and sing in his ways, and call him their exceeding joy.

Let this holy joy give check to carnal mirth; for having seen so much reason to rejoice in Christ Jesus, we deceive ourselves if we rejoice in a thing of nought: we are not forbidden to rejoice, but our joy must be turned into the right channel,

and our mirth sanctified, which will suppress and silence that laughter that is mad. The frothiness of a vain mind must be cured by a religious cheerfulness, as well as by religious seriousness.

Let it give check also to the sorrow of the world, and that inordinate grief for outward crosses, which sinks the spirits, dries the bones, and worketh death. Why art thou cast down, and why disquieted for a light affliction, which is but for a moment, when even that is so far from doing thee any real prejudice, that it works for thee a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory? Learn, my soul, to sit down upon the ruins of all thy creature-comforts, by a withered fig-tree, a fruitless vine, and a blasted crop, and even then to sing to the praise and glory of God, as the God of thy salvation. When thou art full, enjoy God in all; when thou art empty, enjoy all in God.

MATT. HENRY.

SECTION XII.—ON THE SABBATH.

The Fourth Commandment equally binding with the rest.

AND NOW we must go on to consider THE SOLEMNITIES WHICH ATTENDED THE PROMULGATION OF THE MORAL LAW, of which the Fourth Command is so distinguished a part. These differed from the majesty which accompanied the first institution of the day of rest in Eden. Then it was enregistered in the bold and legible characters of the six days' order of creation; whilst the written record was brief and general. Now it is surrounded, in common with the remaining elementary branches of duty, with those traits of visible glory, that awful *voice of words*, that detailed record, that reference to a preceding enactment, those reasons of universal application, which, after a lapse of two thousand five hundred years, were best adapted to explain its import, and insure human obedience in all future periods of time. The moral law stands singular and alone, amidst the revelations made to Moses. The other communications were by more ordinary and usual means; the Ten Commandments by the immediate voice of God. The other parts of the Jewish economy were conveyed by

calm impressions; this by *thunderings and lightnings*, and *attendant angels*, and the *trembling mount*, and the *darkness*, and all the *terrors* at which *Moses exceedingly feared and quaked*. Recall to mind the solemn scene, that you may imbibe the full dignity of all the precepts of the moral law, and of the sabbatical amongst the number. Hear; the *trump sounds*, and the *voice of words* is uttered. See; no one but the holy prophet may approach: *if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it is stoned, or thrust through with a dart*. Behold; two tables of stone are prepared by the Almighty himself. Upon these the finger of God inscribes *The Ten Commandments*, and ADDETH NO MORE. The tables are broken by Moses, as he descends from the mount—and, lo, the law is re-written on second tables with the same hand; and is finally deposited, not with the rest of the Mosaic statutes, but separate and alone, within the ark of the covenant. Can any circumstances impress us with a more awful sense of the singular importance of every precept? Can any thing more distinguish and elevate the moral and perpetual, above the temporary and ceremonial law—and separate and single out the decalogue in

point of dignity and prominence from all other enactments? The whole Bible contains nothing so peculiar and majestic as this introduction to this new dispensation. Where is the man that will venture to lessen the number of the commandments? Where is the man that from ten will presume to reduce them to nine? Where is the Protestant that will expunge, with the Church of Rome, the command which happens most to militate against his corrupt practices? Where is the man that will obliterate that precept especially, which so immediately respects the honor of God and the glory offered to his name, which, standing in the very heart of the code, binds its injunctions together, and gives strength and consistence to the whole?

I conceive it is impossible for simple-minded Christians to consider these things, and not to see at once the marked distinction between the shadow and types of a particular dispensation, and the eternal rules of right and wrong. Their prayer, I am persuaded, will continue to be, as to each particular commandment, and as to the fourth no less than the others, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;' and as to the entire series, without exception or difference, 'Lord, write all these thy laws on our hearts, we beseech thee.' . . .

Again, THE DISTINGUISHING PROMISE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS FOR ITS OBJECT TO RENDER THE DUTIES OF THE SABBATH MORE DELIGHTFUL, AND THUS INCREASES TENFOLD THEIR OBLIGATION.

For what is the distinguishing promise of the New Testament? What is the characteristic of the Gospel? Is it not the larger grace of the Holy Spirit? Is it not that it is *the ministration of the Spirit*? And what is the most important office of the Divine Spirit? Is it not to write this very law, these very Ten Commandments and none other, this very decalogue which was effaced from the heart of man by the fall, and which was republished with so much solemnity on Mount Sinai, and written on tables of stone with the finger of God, and deposited in the ark—is it not TO WRITE THIS LAW UPON THE HEART OF MAN? And would our Lord have promised the Holy Spirit for this pur-

pose, if he had himself relaxed any part of this law? And does not this promised aid increase the obligations of this law upon man, and exhibit its importance with a tenfold force?

Read the Apostle's comment in the 8th chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, where he describes the new covenant, and contrasts it with the old; *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt: because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws (the very decalogue of which we speak) into their mind, and write them in their hearts, Heb. viii. 8—10.*

And accordingly, is not the first commandment, to worship one God, thus written upon the heart? Is not the second, to *worship him not with graven images*? Is not the third, *not to take his awful name in vain*? And so of all the others. And is the fourth then omitted? Is there a gap, a failure in the divine code? Was the fourth precept inserted in the decalogue by a mistake? Are there ten commandments in the law, and only nine written on the heart? Is the institution of the Sabbath engraven and exhibited in the very order of the first creation, and not engraven in the order of the new creation? Is the soul of man formed to this heavenly temper in all other respects, and has he no taste for devoting the seventh portion of his time for the immediate service of his God? No, my brethren, we have no abrogation of the immutable law of God under the New Testament. On the contrary, the office of the Holy Spirit is to infix it deeply in all its parts on the inmost soul of man. This confirms and clenches all our preceding arguments; and especially that from the conduct and doctrine of our Lord, by whom the Spirit was sent for the comfort and guidance of the church.

The Apostle yet more distinctly teaches us this, when he says, that the Christian is an epistle of Christ, and refers to the

* The Popish catechisms have frequently omitted the second commandment; the practice may now be discontinued perhaps.

* 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature;' OR, NEW CREATION, 2 Cor. v. 17.

two tables of the law as transcribed on the human heart, and to the Holy Spirit as the Divine Author of the transcription. Mark, I entreat you, his language: *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart*, 2 Cor. iii. 3. Here then are the two tables of the law—the first and second—the one containing the precepts of the love of God; the other, those of the love of man. Here is a precise transfer of this law, a removal from mere tablets of stone, to the *fleshly tablets of the heart*. In this transfer, do any of the commandments fall away? In the Christian's heart, the two tablets are re-impressed, the two tablets as they came from the hand of God. And has the fourth commandment disappeared in the passage through which all the rest have found their way from the tablets of a literal inscription, to those of the Christian's heart? No, my brethren, if 'there were a window in the Christian's bosom, you would see the fourth commandment filling as large a space of that epistle which *is written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God*, as it does in the decalogue of Moses.* You will find the Christian saying, *I delight in this*, as well as every other part of *the law of God, after the inner man*, Rom. vii. 22; you will find him acknowledging with St. John, *His commandments are not grievous*, 1 John v. 3; you will find him saying with the Psalmist, *Therefore hold I straight all thy commandments, and all false ways I utterly abhor*, Ps. cxix. 128.

Now just in proportion as the Holy Spirit is the grand peculiarity of the Christian dispensation, is the obligation of all the commandments, and therefore of the fourth, increased. We stated in a former place, that the new motives which the advancing privileges and light of the church continually afforded, were so many additional claims of the day of rest upon man. But how much more are these claims strengthened by the aid now vouchsafed by the Holy Spirit—this aid being the distinguishing object of all his operations—producing a transfer of the law of the Sabbath from stony to fleshly tables; and thus ending in a far lighter burden as to

external service, and a far weightier obligation in respect of love and gratitude?

REV. D. WILSON.

The Sabbath not affected by the abrogation of the Mosaic Dispensation.

SUCH is the estimate which we are led to form of the essential moral character of the law of the Sabbath, from a review of every part of the Old Testament. More than three thousand six hundred years since the first Sabbath have now elapsed. The sacred institution stands on the margin of the New Testament dispensation. We naturally inquire, then, what we might expect to be its dignity, if we find nothing directly to the contrary, in the kingdom of Messiah? It derived not its authority from the Levitical law; it could lose, therefore, none of its sanctity by the abrogation of it. The same respect would be due to it as before that intervening dispensation. Whatever the Sabbath was when it entered the Mosaic ritual, that would it be when it came from it. The cessation of the ceremonial law would no more release the worshipper of God from the observation of a weekly rest, than it would cancel the injunction of filial piety, or the prohibition of theft, murder, adultery, false witness, or concupiscence. The importance of all we have been considering is in this view very material. We have shown its divine institution in paradise, the traces of its observance during the patriarchal ages, its re-enactment in the wilderness before the Mosaic economy, at the miraculous fall of manna. We have also noticed its solemn incorporation in the Ten Commandments—the awful glories of that promulgation—its dignity above all the ceremonies of the Jewish religion—its essential and perpetual obligation as inculcated by the prophets, and destined to form a part of the Gospel age. It comes forth, therefore, from the hand of Moses with all its pristine authority, which it had, in fact, never lost as to any portion of the human race, except as the corruption of man had perverted or forgotten the original institution.

Nay, it enters the Gospel dispensation with more than its patriarchal majesty and obligation. It has been accumulating, not diminishing, its claims upon men, by all the testimonies to its essential importance which Moses and the Prophets gave. It has acquired new force, new evidence,

* Chalmers.

new illustration, by its position under an economy which, if it had been merely a ceremony, would have buried it amid a thousand surrounding rites.

The Gospel will, therefore, we may conclude, secure to the original institution of the Sabbath more ample scope, higher obligations, and a more elevated position of dignity and importance. The Gospel is the last and most perfect dispensation—the completion of all the preceding, the time of enlarged privilege, of superabundant grace! If, therefore, a weekly day of repose and religious worship was granted to the saints of the patriarchal dispensations—and if even under the law of bondage this blessing was continued to the Jew, much more will it be vouchsafed to the Christian,—much more will it accompany *the law of liberty*. We may be sure that the boon is not revoked; we may be sure that man is not doomed now to seven days' labor instead of six; we may be sure that his time for worshipping God is not abridged, nor the pledge of the covenant of grace lessened and restrained.

But this is not all. The Sabbath had been increasing in its moral influence upon man from the first institution. Every fresh motive to the love of God, every ray of glory from Mount Sinai, every prophecy of a future Saviour, had been augmenting proportionably his duty, by affording him more copious aids in fulfilling it. Christians, then, being favored with a clearer knowledge of the Divine will, having more motives to love and serve God, having a more abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit, than under any preceding period, we may be sure that their character will be superior, their delight in their worship of God more warm, their celebration of God's praises in creation and redemption proportionably more fervent. Yet, if a sabbatical institution is not binding upon Christians, we must reverse the supposition. We must forget the devotion of the patriarchs, the spiritual fervor of the psalmist, the zeal for the Sabbath which animated Nehemiah and Ezra, the delight in its duties foretold by Isaiah as marking the Gospel age; and the Christian must take his station below the Jew in spirituality and love. But this can never be the case. We may conclude that if one day in seven was the measure under more

imperfect dispensations, a less term cannot suffice under the influence of so many motives and inducements to a higher degree of love in the worship of God.*

We shall want, therefore, no enactment, no express command in the New Testament. Things will go on as they did before the Mosaic economy, except as a richer effusion of grace will render the Sabbath a more delightful season of repose than in the preceding ages. The worship of the New Testament will be, we may conclude, a restoration of the patriarchal in its primitive simplicity and purity, dropping the incumbrances imposed during the time of the law, and acquiring all the new influence and obligations which the infinite benefits of the Gospel confer.

And thus, as the patriarchal sacrifices passed on into the passover and numerous offerings of the law during the term of that intervening dispensation, and then emerged in the simple evangelical supper of our Lord—as the patriarchal circumcision reserved its rites during the same economy, and then yielded to the sacrament of baptism—as the patriarchal institution of marriage, suspended on account of the hardness of the people's hearts during the Jewish age, was re-established and came to its full effect in the Christian law of marriage,—so the patriarchal day of rest, with its worship of God, its celebration of the wonders of creation, and its provision for the religious repose of man, after having been annexed for a period to the national covenant of the Jews, was restored to its first design in the Christian Sabbath.

A re-enactment in the New Testament would be a denial, by implication, of its previous institution and authority. Nothing is re-enacted in the Gospel. The moral law, the essential duties of religion, the relations of man to his Maker and Benefactor, the necessity of a season for divine worship, the proportion of time destined for it from the creation, all the precepts of the decalogue—remain unchanged. They are not again formally promulgated. Creation and Mount Sinai suffice. They go on of course, and the Sabbath with them, if no express and formal abrogation of it be found in the Gospel.

REV. D. WILSON.

* Archdeacon Potter.

*The Change in the Day of the Sabbath,
and its continued obligation.*

IN the first ages of the world, the creation of the world was the benefaction by which God was principally known, and for which he was chiefly to be worshipped. The Jews, in their religious assemblies, had to commemorate other blessings—the political creation of their nation out of Abraham's family, and their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage. We Christians have to commemorate, beside the common benefit of the creation, the transcendent blessing of our redemption—our new creation to the hope of everlasting life, of which our Lord's resurrection to life on the first day of the week is a sure pledge and evidence. You see, therefore, that the Sabbath, in the progress of ages, hath acquired new ends, by new manifestations of the Divine mercy; and these new ends justify correspondent alterations of the original institution. It has been imagined that a change was made of the original day by Moses—that the Sabbath was transferred by him from the day on which it had been originally kept in the patriarchal ages, to that on which the Israelites left Egypt. The conjecture is not unnatural; but it is, in my judgment, a mere conjecture, of which the Sacred History affords neither proof nor confutation. This, however, is certain, that upon our Lord's resurrection, the Sabbath was transferred, in memory of that event, the great foundation of the Christian's hopes, from the last to the first day of the week. The alteration seems to have been made by the authority of the Apostles, and to have taken place on the very day on which our Lord arose; for on that day the Apostles were assembled, and on that day se'nnight we find them assembled again. The celebration of these two first Sundays was honored with our Lord's own presence. It was perhaps to set a mark of distinction upon this day in particular, that the intervening week passed off, as it should seem, without any repetition of his first visit to the eleven Apostles. From that time, the Sunday was the constant Sabbath of the primitive church. The Christian, therefore, who devoutly sanctifies one day in seven, although it be the first day of the week, not the last, as was originally ordained, may rest assured that he fully satisfies the spirit of the ordinance. Had

the propriety of the alteration been less apparent than it is from the reason of the thing, the authority of the Apostles to loose and bind was absolute.

I must remark, however, that their authority upon this point was exercised not purely in consideration of the expediency, but upon the higher consideration of the necessity of a change—a necessity arising, as I conceive, out of the original spirit of the institution. The original observation of a Sabbath on every seventh day was a public and distinguishing characteristic of the worship of the Creator, who finished his work in six days, and rested on the seventh. This was the public character by which the worship of the true God was distinguished, that his festival returned every seventh day; and, by the strict observance of this ordinance, the holy patriarchs, and the Jews their descendants, made as it were a public protestation once in every week against the errors of idolatry, which, instead of the true God, the Creator of the universe, paid its adoration either to the works of God, the sun and moon, and other celestial bodies, or to mere figments of the human imagination, misled by a diabolical illusion—to imaginary beings presiding over the natural elements, or the departed ghosts of deceased kings and heroes—and, in the last stage of the corruption, to inanimate images, by which the supposed influences of the celestial bodies and physical qualities of the elements were emblematically represented, and the likenesses of the deified kings supposed to be portrayed. To this protestation against heathenism, the propriety of which binds the worshippers of the true God in all ages to a weekly Sabbath, it is reasonable that Christians should add a similar protestation against Judaism. It was necessary that Christians should openly separate as it were from the communion of the Jews, who, after their perverse rejection of our Lord, ceased to be the true church of God: and the sanctification of the Saturday being the most visible and notorious character of the Jewish worship, it was necessary that the Christian Sabbath should be transferred to some other day of the week. A change of the day being for these reasons necessary, the choice of the Apostles was directed to the first day of the week, as that on which our Lord's resurrection finished and sealed the work of our redemption; so that, in the same

act by which we acknowledge the Creator, and protest against the claims of the Jews to be still the depositaries of the true religion, we might confess the Saviour whom the Jews crucified.

You have now seen that the Christian clearly stands obliged to the observance of a Sabbath,—that, in the observance of his Sabbath, he is held to the original institution of keeping every seventh day,—and that his proper Sabbath is the first day of the seven. By keeping a Sabbath, we acknowledge a God, and declare that we are not atheists; by keeping one day in seven, we protest against idolatry, and acknowledge *that* God who in the beginning made the heavens and the earth; and by keeping our Sabbath on the first of the week, we protest against Judaism, and acknowledge *that* God who, having made the world, sent his only-begotten Son to redeem mankind. The observation, therefore, of the Sunday in the Christian church, is a public weekly assertion of the two first articles in our Creed—the belief in God the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

I must not quit this part of my subject without briefly taking notice of a text in St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, which has been supposed to contradict the whole doctrine which I have asserted, and to prove that the observation of a Sabbath in the Christian church is no point of duty, but a matter of mere compliance with an ancient custom. In the second chapter of that epistle St. Paul, speaking of *the handwriting of ordinances which is blotted out, having been nailed to the Redeemer's cross*; adds, in the sixteenth verse, *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holiday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days*. From this text, no less a man than the venerable Calvin drew the conclusion, in which he has been rashly followed by other considerable men, that the sanctification of the seventh day is no indispensable duty in the Christian church,—that it is one of those carnal ordinances of the Jewish religion which our Lord hath blotted out. The truth however is, that, in the apostolical age, the first day of the week, though it was observed with great reverence, was not called the Sabbath-day, but the Lord's day,—that the separation of the Christian church from the Jewish

communion might be marked by the name as well as by the day of their weekly festival; and the name of the Sabbath-days was appropriated to the Saturdays, and certain days in the Jewish church which were likewise called Sabbaths in the law, because they were observed with no less sanctity. The Sabbath-days, therefore, of which St. Paul in this passage speaks, were not the Sundays of the Christians, but the Saturdays and the other Sabbaths of the Jewish calendar. The Judaizing heretics, with whom St. Paul was all his life engaged, were strenuous advocates for the observation of these Jewish festivals in the Christian church; and his (St. Paul's) admonition to the Colossians is, that they should not be disturbed by the censures of those who reproached them for neglecting to observe these Jewish Sabbaths with Jewish ceremonies. It appears from the First Epistle to the Corinthians, that the Sunday was observed in the church of Corinth with St. Paul's own approbation. It appears from the Apocalypse, that it was generally observed in the time when that book was written by St. John; and it is mentioned by the earliest apologists of the Christian faith, as a necessary branch of Christian worship. But the Sabbaths of the Jewish church are abolished; nor is the Christian, in the observation of his own Sabbath, to conduct himself by the childish rules of the old pharisaical superstition.

BP. HORSLEY.

The Universal obligation of the Sabbath.

To the general question, What regard is due to the institution of a Sabbath under the Christian dispensation? the answer is plainly this,—Neither more nor less than was due to it in the patriarchal ages, before the Mosaic covenant took place. It is a gross mistake to consider the Sabbath as a mere festival of the Jewish church, deriving its whole sanctity from the Levitical law. The contrary appears, as well from the evidence of the fact which sacred history affords, as from the reason of the thing which the same history declares. The religious observation of the seventh day hath a place in the decalogue among the very first duties of natural religion. The reason assigned for the injunction is general, and hath no relation or regard to the particular circumstances of the Israelites, or to the particular relation in

which they stood to God as his chosen people. The creation of the world was an event equally interesting to the whole human race; and the acknowledgment of God as our Creator is a duty, in all ages and in all countries, equally incumbent upon every individual of mankind. The terms in which the reason of the ordinance is assigned plainly describe it as an institution of an earlier age. "Therefore the Lord blessed the seventh, and *set it apart*." (That is the true import of the words 'hallowed it.') These words, you will observe, express a past time. It is not said, "Therefore the Lord *now* blesses the seventh day, and sets it apart;" but, "Therefore he *did* bless it, and set it apart in time past; and he now requires that you his chosen people should be observant of that ancient institution." And in farther confirmation of the fact, we find, by the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, that the Israelites were acquainted with the Sabbath, and had been accustomed to some observance of it before Moses received the tables of the law at Sinai. When the manna was first given for the nourishment of the army in the wilderness, the people were told, that on the sixth day they should collect the double of the daily portion. When the event was found to answer to the promise, Moses gave command, that the redundant portion should be prepared and laid by for the meal of the succeeding day; *For tomorrow*, said he, *is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: on that day ye shall not find it in the field; for the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days*. He mentions the Sabbath as a divine ordinance, with which he evidently supposes the people were well acquainted; for he alleges the well-known sanctity of that day to account for the extraordinary quantity of manna which was found upon the ground on the day preceding it. But the appointment of the Sabbath, to which his words allude, must have been earlier than the appointment of it in the law, of which no part was yet given: for this first gathering of the manna, which is recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, was in the second month of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt; and at Sinai, where the law was given, they arrived not till the third. Indeed, the antiquity of the Sabbath was a thing so well understood among the Jews themselves, that some of

their rabbins had the vanity to pretend that an exact adherence to the observance of this day, under the severities of the Egyptian servitude, was the merit by which their ancestors procured a miraculous deliverance. The deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage was surely an act of God's free mercy, in which their own merit had no share; nor is it likely that their Egyptian lords left them much at liberty to sanctify the Sabbath, if they were inclined to do it. The tradition, therefore, is vain and groundless: but it clearly speaks the opinion of those among whom it passed, of the antiquity of the institution in question; which appears, indeed, upon better evidence, to have been coeval with the world itself. In the book of Genesis, the mention of this institution closes the history of the creation.

An institution of this antiquity, and of this general importance, could derive no part of its sanctity from the authority of the Mosaic law; and the abrogation of that law no more releases the worshippers of God from a rational observance of a Sabbath, than it cancels the injunction of filial piety, or the prohibitions of theft and murder, adultery, calumny, and avarice. The worship of the Christian church is properly to be considered as a restoration of the patriarchal, in its primitive simplicity and purity;—and of the patriarchal worship, the Sabbath was the noblest and perhaps the simplest rite.

BP. HORSLEY.

The Sabbath an indispensable Preparation for the Heavenly Blessedness.

BUT, lastly, we have pleaded for the Sabbath, because it is an indispensable preparation for THE HEAVENLY BLESSEDNESS. Its appeal to the human conscience terminates here. Heaven or hell is at stake. We all profess to look for a heavenly rest. There are few, perhaps none, who do not desire and expect to pass to a happy eternity when they die. Their ideas of its nature may be obscure, their preparations for it may be most defective. Still a vague hope of it, as opposed to eternal misery, and under the idea of a state of repose and felicity, occupies most minds. But let us consider the strict connexion which subsists between the employments and delights of the Sabbath upon earth, and those of that endless and

beatific Sabbath which *remains for the people of God* at last. Do we recollect the descriptions given in the Bible, of the company, the praises, the spiritual and unceasing employs of that exalted place? Is it a carnal repose which it offers? Is it bodily indulgence? Is it mere cessation from toil and sorrow? Is it not the eternal presence, the eternal enjoyment, the eternal praises of our God, and the Redeemer? Open the heavenly gates. You see the worshippers. You hear their hymns. What do they chant? The praises of *the Lamb that was slain; the love of him who died for them*; the majesty, and wisdom, and power, and glory, of their Father and Lord. And what is the temper of mind, what the habits, the notions of happiness, what the moral condition which can derive felicity from such an employ? It is an employ of continual holiness, ceaseless adoration, perpetual activity in the service of God. The loose ideas formed of heaven, as an exemption from suffering merely, as standing only in opposition to fatigue and weariness, as being contrasted with misery and condemnation—are most delusive. It is holiness—it is the love of God—it is the worship of the Lamb that was slain—it is the resting not day nor night in the praises of the Almighty—it is felicity derived from the completion of the divine faculties and habits acquired in this world.

Observe, then, the connexion of the Sabbath-duties here on earth, with these ultimate and consummated duties of the eternal Sabbath above. The employments of the day here are holiness, the adoration of God in Christ, the praises of creating, redeeming love. The Sabbath is the day of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit: that is, it is the very same in essence with the heavenly Sabbath; has the same objects, the same joys, the same praises, the same gratitude, the same sources of happiness.

He that would prepare for Heaven, must honor the Sabbath upon earth. He that would hope for the spiritual joys there, must acquire a taste and aptitude for them here.

All is connected in the divine plan. The Sabbath of the church militant is the pledge and foretaste of the Sabbath of the church triumphant. Were we in heaven without a new nature, a change of heart, a delight in the worship of God, an earnest longing after Christ, an acquiescence in holiness—

we should neither derive happiness from it, nor be capable of its employments. They who argue against our feeble, preparatory Sabbaths; they who object, cavil, contemn; they who prefer every other employment to the worship of God; they who complain of weariness and satiety in the services of Christ—have an evidence in their own breasts of their unfitness for a heavenly world—they are condemned out of their own mouths. The louder they exclaim against our Lord's day and its duties, the more decidedly do they exclude themselves from the Christian character and the Christian hope.

Let us, then, awake to the truth of the case. The day of Sabbath made and constituted for man, is essential to all his moral duties and hopes—it seals his evidence for a heavenly world—it prepares him for its joys and its employments—it forms its harbinger and foretaste.

The Sabbath will, therefore, never cease till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. As other figures and emblems terminated not till the substance of them came; so will not this grand type and foretaste of the ultimate repose of eternity, be determined, till earth gives place to heaven.

REV. D. WILSON.

As constituting a preparative for a still more perfect and permanent rest, the duties of this day assume a most useful and important character. The whole of a religious life is indeed a course of instruction for that exalted sphere, in which the Christian is one day to be placed. Days of devotion, and more especially the Sabbath, are the natural instruments for giving effect to this preparatory discipline. Whatever constitutes, in any degree, a duty on this day, is, though on a lower scale, the very act and exercise of angels, and the spirits of the blessed who dwell in the presence of God. When performed as such, it raises the soul from that dust to which it is accustomed to cleave; while the reflections which it indulges upon the labors, the cares, and the temptations of a finished week, suggest to it a pleasure, correspondent, though by faint and distant resemblance, to that which is felt by those disembodied spirits, who have entered into rest.

Meetness is deemed requisite in candidates for every state, either of service or enjoyment. To produce that meetness which Christ demands in those who aspire

to a place in his kingdom, previous habits of preparation are indispensably necessary. And what expedient can better answer so important a design, than the religious employment of such an interval of time as the periodical return of this sacred day affords? If social worship or solitary meditation have any efficacy, as means, in illumining the mind, purifying the heart, and exalting the affections, they must possess this efficacy in a very high proportion at these solemn festivals, when their course is not embarrassed by intervening cares, nor their offices incumbered by worldly speculations. The mind is *then* most open to religious conviction, and the heart most accessible to devotional impressions, when the objects of daily engagement are fairly laid aside, and a veil is thrown over all the attractions and the follies of the world. How sweet is the Christian's intercourse, how profitable are his meditations, while prosecuting the various duties of this holy day! He finds throughout it, a nearer approach to God, and closer communion with the Father of his Spirit, than ordinary days and opportunities afford him. Standing, as he does, aloof from the snares and temptations by which he is most commonly beset, he feels his faith strengthened, his hopes encouraged, his joys increased, and all the graces of his character proportionably improved. The infirmities which had gained upon him in the current week, become sensibly reduced. The law of the spirit of life within him revives, and the law of sin proportionably declines. The errors which were corrupting his faith, are corrected; and the doubts which had begun to shake his confidence, are removed. New and brighter views of the love of God in Christ, and of his own peculiar interest in that regard, take possession of his soul: and the exercises which employ, and the pleasures which exhilarate him, fit him for returning to the affairs of the world; with less danger of being won over by its blandishments, or subdued by its terrors.

In such a view of the subject, the Sabbath must be considered as unquestionably intitled to no common veneration. While all days are in a manner sacred, as affording the means and bringing the obligation of religious duty, *this* day is commended to us by a variety of advantages, peculiarly connected with the purposes of its institution; and manifestly flowing from

the mercies of God to a fallen, an ignorant, and an indigent race. Designed as we are, in the covenant of his grace, for glory and happiness, elected to a kingdom of purity and joy, we find in the regular returns of a Sabbath, the means of quickening our languid affections in the pursuit of our high and glorious vocation; and of establishing, with more uniform and habitual attachment, our tastes and appetites for holy things. To such a day, the servants of God, necessarily immersed in cares and worldly perplexities, look forward with anxious desire, and devout impatience. Loving, as they do, the Tabernacles of the Lord of Hosts, and delighting in his word more than in their necessary food, their eyes long for the returning Sabbath, more than those that wait for the morning. Sickening at the sights and sounds of wickedness, they sigh for some temporary deliverance from the society, the jealousies, and the provocations of sinners; and eager to escape from what their hearts abhor, they anticipate that season of devout sequestration, in which, for a time at least, *the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.*

REV. JOHN OWEN.

The Sabbath was made for Man.

THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN; was originally granted him as a boon—was appointed for his necessary repose from worldly toil and care—was made, not for the Jew merely, but for man as man; for man as consisting of body and soul; as requiring rest and refreshment for the one, religious instruction for the other; as created for his Maker's glory, and destined for eternal happiness or misery.

What a noble declaration of the perpetual design and authority of the institution! Of all our Saviour's axioms, few are more clear, definite, important, universal. It takes for granted that there would be a Sabbath under his dispensation; and it defines its purposes, that it was made for the advantage and benefit of man—for his highest welfare both as to his body and soul.

Nor is the caution which our Lord adds less appropriate, considering the austerities which the Jewish masters had imposed; NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH. Their error lay in overlooking the grand moral end of the institution. They taught that "man was

made for the Sabbath." Our Lord recalls the institution to its first and true design; he teaches that it was not a rite ending in itself, and to which all the moral purposes of it should yield; but that God would *have mercy and not sacrifice*, and that when the real spiritual and exalted interests of man, for which it was appointed, required a suspension of any of its outward observances, that suspension was lawful.

The axiom and caution explain all our Lord's conduct. The fundamental law of the Sabbath remains unchanged; as it began, so it will end only with the world itself. But the embarrassments and trammels of human fancy are dissolved, and its simplicity is restored. . . .

The Sabbath was made for man, to give him repose and religious peace, to give him time for the worship and adoration of God on earth; to be the solemn guarantee and type of his last rest; and to prepare and introduce him to the joy and ceaseless adorations of that glorious state. The Sabbath is man's privilege, interest, duty. The Sabbath is the glory of his religion, the highest exercise of his rational nature, the bond and link which connects him with all that is spiritual, all that is holy, all that is divine on earth; and which then transmits him to that exalted scene of eternal, and perfect, and uninterrupted spirituality, holiness, and blessedness in heaven, for which he was created.

REV. D. WILSON.

The Word and Ordinances are the general means whereby Christ conveys his quickening Power.

THE general means whereby God conveys his quickening power, are, his *word* and *ordinances*. This, like the pool of Siloam to the blind man, and like the waters of Bethesda to the lame, are the usual means of his healing power. These are the appointed and established means to which he has connected his promises; here, therefore, we may expect every blessing. It is the promise of his grace and presence in them, that renders them so important in the Christian practice, so useful in the Christian life, so delightful to the Christian's heart. When observed in faith; when through them we look to, and enjoy the power and influence of, the Lord; then, *Oh, how amiable are the tabernacles of the Lord!* His house is the

very gate of heaven; the believing mind longs to behold again and again that *glory of the Lord* which he has *seen in his sanctuary*, and to taste again those *waters of life* which have there refreshed his soul, in this *dry and barren land*. His word, indeed, connected with his promises and his ordinances, is the especial mean he uses for the regeneration and conversion of his people. The truth therein is brought into the mind, and strikes and affects it as the truth of God in all its glory and solemnity, its excellency and importance. Its views impress the heart; it is received, not with that general assent which leaves the greater part of professors uninfluenced by its declaration; but it is fixed upon the conscience, and received, not as the word of man, but as the word and power of God. Now the change is effected *from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God*. *The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and becomes a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart*, Heb. iv. 12. The words of Jesus become *spirit and life*, John vi. 63, because attended with his Spirit and life-giving power. The regenerating change in a sinner's heart is therefore generally attributed to this;—*being born again*, says the Apostle Peter, *not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. i. 23: and the Apostle James,—*of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*, James i. 18. Oftentimes, when the immediate cause of this change is not perceived, it may be traced to some truth of the word of God lodged upon the mind by early education, general instruction, or Christian conversation, which the Spirit of God hath brought back to the recollection in its substance, if not in words; and impressed with an effectual influence on the heart. What, indeed, the Lord himself can do or effect without his word or ordinances, we know not, nor should we indulge ourselves in useless speculation on such a subject; it ought to be sufficient for us to know that these are his own established means of conveying his power and blessings; and that, though he can work without means himself, yet he obliges us to the observance of them. These considerations should make us exceedingly

thankful for the Gospel and Gospel ordinances, constantly attentive to reading his word, and waiting in his courts. *For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God . . . for how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?* Rom. x. 14. 17. Without the use of his means, we have no promise, and therefore can have no well-grounded expectation. In that believing use his promise insures his blessing. But then let it be remembered, whatever are the means employed, all the work itself is the work of the Spirit. Means can have no effect to change the heart: they are but a dead letter without him; it is his own power through them all that gives them their efficacy. REV. W. GOODE.

Benefits of the Ordinances of Social Worship.

BUT in this, as well as in every other duty performed to the Almighty, if the honor accrues to him, the benefit redounds in an equal proportion to those who perform it. The very homage that is paid in these acts of social adoration, is an instrument of generating, strengthening, and maturing the faith of the devout, beyond all the expedients of human contrivance. Man is, under all his forms, and through all his changes, the creature of habits. The Gospel, which renews him in the spirit of his mind, leaves him still subject to the infirmities of a corporeal nature. He needs the use, the repeated use, of services consecrated to religious purposes; and cannot renounce the means of grace, without endangering his hopes of glory. Of this need he is perpetually reminded, not only by a fear of danger, but by a sense of want; by strong desires after these sacred banquets; by *longings*, yea even *thirstings, for the courts of the Lord*; by appetites for spiritual nourishment, equally impatient of denial and restraint.

It is easy to imagine how cold and careless, how languid and lukewarm, that faith must become, which, relying for support upon its native strength, forsakes these *fountains of living waters*, whence so much fruitfulness and refreshment flow. Prophets and patriarchs visited them with gladness, and partook of them with gratitude and delight. They watered the

Church of Christ in the period of its greatest fertility, and made it fat and flourishing; and it is upon them that it must depend, under the Divine blessing, for those times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which may enable it to bring forth fruit in old age.

There is in these ordinances of social worship, a peculiar advantage to the rise, the progress, and the maturity of religion in the human breast. Not to mention how greatly the affections are drawn out and expanded by a union of spiritual natures in sublime and similar acts; not to dwell upon the opportunities which such occupation affords for exercising the noblest feelings of the heart, in holy love, and solemn sympathy, those exalted qualities of the Christian character; the services throughout are a school of instruction, and present the most edifying scenes for every stage and condition of faith. There are doubts, which the private Christian would tremble to divulge; and wants, which he would blush to own. There are terrors by which he is dismayed, and infirmities by which he is discouraged, that appear to belong exclusively to his own peculiar case; and fill him with apprehensions for his future and final salvation. In the various duties of social worship, this humble inquirer will find instruction and relief. By the word of God, as read and interpreted, his doubts are met and resolved, his wants anticipated and supplied; his alarms are shown to be needless and unfounded; his infirmities ordinary and natural: and he is dismissed with a conviction, that settles his faith, animates his hope, and reconciles him to the vicissitudes of his lot. He feels, that darkness and light, tears and comforts, are the alternate portion of the Christian below: he therefore girds up the loins of his mind; and in contemplation of the glorious recompense set before him, goes on his way rejoicing.

It is in assemblies thus constituted and conducted, that the members of Christ's mystical body are fitted for their respective offices; and that those who are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets are rendered lively stones in the spiritual building. Here food proportioned to the respective demands of the different worshippers is dispensed, by those whose office it is rightly to divide the word of life; milk for babes in know-

ledge and virtue, and meat for those more largely exercised in Christian experience. Here, rather than elsewhere, the weary and heavy-laden are comforted and refreshed; the hands that hang down are raised; the feeble knees are confirmed; the broken-hearted are bound up; deliverance is offered to the captives; and the acceptable year of the Lord is published to all. What sight can be more animating than the crowded courts of the living God? what sounds more elevating than the mingled prayers and praises of many worshippers? when the multitude address with one accord, their common Parent; when prayers and praises, audience and utterance alternately engage them; one heart and one soul appear to actuate and animate the whole assembly; fervor breathes in every accent; devotion sits on every eye; the kingdom of Heaven suffers a holy violence; and great grace descends upon them all.

REV. JOHN OWEN.

The Plea of being as religiously employed at Home, no justification for being absent from the House of God.

THE plea of being as religiously employed at home, however specious it may appear, is in fact no justification of systematical absence from the House of God. Sufficient, and more than sufficient time may be found in the course of the Sabbath, for solitary and private devotion, without trespassing upon the hours allotted to social worship; and it may well be doubted, the consideration of duty being put out of the question, whether any advantages derived from domestic meditation can counterbalance the loss of that sacred unction, which is often dispensed, and always promised to the assembled worshippers of the living God. To those who abstain from congregational worship on principles (if such they may be called) of profaneness, irreligion, or atheism; this treatise has little to offer. *Their* conduct is influenced by motives which are likely to be very slightly affected, by considerations either of moral duty or spiritual ad-

vantage. On them the language of threatening and of invitation is equally lost: their ears are alike insensible to the voice of the lawgiver, speak he ever so awfully; and to that of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. Forgetful of God and abandoned to their lusts, they will not visit those assemblies in which they might hear their character delineated and their fate denounced. In a future assembly, which will *compel* their attendance, their eyes must behold Him whom their hearts refused to worship: and the distance they have kept from his sanctuaries on earth, will in righteous retribution be punished, by an edict of perpetual banishment from the felicity of his presence and the glory of his power.

A proportion of this guilt will also be contracted, by *infrequent attendance* upon social worship. A variety of circumstances may be imagined, under which a regular observance of public worship may be rendered utterly impracticable; nor would it be possible to delineate with exactness, the several cases of exception to the operation of this general rule. Men must be left to judge for themselves, of the weakness or strength, the falsehood or truth of those pretences, upon which they refuse obedience to the standing orders of a known and imperative law. To his own master each individual standeth or falleth. So much however it may be expedient to suggest, that the necessity should be very urgent, and the reason very manifest, which are pleaded to justify the intermission of religious duties in the House of God. Where the Almighty condescends to be present, a small difficulty should not obstruct the attendance of his creatures; where His visits are spontaneous and regular, ours should not be reluctant and intermitted. Is our attachment to His ordinances grown languid? are our desires after Him become faint? let us reflect upon the danger of treating them with indifference; and if we cannot be drawn to his house by a sense of his love, let us at least be driven to it by a dread of his displeasure.

REV. JOHN OWEN.

SECTION XIII.—ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ONLY.

Antiquity of this Doctrine.

THAT man is justified by faith without

the works of the law, was the uniform doctrine of our first Reformers. It is a far more ancient doctrine—it was the doctrine

of the whole college of Apostles : it is more ancient still, it was the doctrine of the prophets : it is older than the prophets - it was the religion of the patriarchs, and no one who has the least acquaintance with the writings of the first Reformers will impute to them more than to the patriarchs, the prophets, or apostles, the absurd opinion, that any man leading an impenitent wicked life will finally, upon the mere pretence of faith, (and faith connected with an impenitent life must always be a mere pretence) obtain admission into heaven.

BP. HORSLEY.

Justification Explained and Enforced.

AND, for a further declaration, to know how we obtain our justification, it is expedient to consider, first, how naughty and sinful we are all, that be of Adam's kindred : and contrariwise, what mercifulness is in God, which to all patient and penitent sinners pardoneth all their offences for Christ's sake. Of these two things no man is lightly ignorant, that ever hath heard of the fall of Adam, which was to the infection of all his posterity, and again, of the inexplicable mercy of our heavenly Father, which sent his only-begotten Son to suffer his most grievous passion for us, and shed his most precious blood, the price of our redemption. But it is greatly to be wished and desired, that, as all Christian men do know the same, so that every man might acknowledge and undoubtedly believe the same to be true, and verified even upon himself ; so that both he may humble himself to God and acknowledge himself a miserable sinner, not worthy to be called his son ; and yet sure, trust that to him, being repentant, God's mercy is ready to forgive. And he that seeth not these two things verified in himself, can take no manner of emolument and profit by acknowledging and believing the said things to be verified in others. But we cannot satisfy our minds, and settle our conscience, that these things be true, saving that we do evidently see that God's word so teacheth us.

The commandments of God lay our faults before our eyes, which putteth us in fear and dread, and maketh us see the wrath of God against our sins, as St. Paul saith, "*Per legem agnitio peccati.*" (*By the law is the knowledge of sin.*) Et, "*Lex operatur iram.*" (*The law worketh*

wrath), and maketh us sorry and repentant, that ever we should come into the displeasure of God, and the captivity of the devil. The gracious and benign promises of God by the mediation of Christ shew us, and that to our great relief and comfort, whensoever we be repentant and return fully to God in our hearts, that we have forgiveness of our sins, be reconciled to God, and be accepted, and reputed just and righteous in his sight, only by his grace and mercy, which he doth grant and give unto us for his dearly beloved Son's sake, Jesus Christ ; who paid a sufficient ransom for our sins : whose blood doth wash away the same : whose bitter and grievous passion is the only pacifying oblation, that putteth away from us the wrath of God, his Father : whose sanctified body, offered on the cross, is the *only sacrifice of sweet and pleasant savour*, as St. Paul saith ; that is to say, of such sweetness and pleasantness to the Father, that for the same he accepteth and reputeth, of like sweetness, all them that the same offering doth serve for.

These benefits of God, with innumerable others, whosoever expendeth and well pondereth in his heart, and thereby conceiveth a firm trust and feeling of God's mercy, whereof springeth in his heart a warm love and fervent heart of zeal towards God, it is not possible but that he shall fall to work, and be ready to the performance of all such works, as he knoweth to be acceptable unto God. And these works only, which follow our justification, do please God : for so much as they proceed from an heart endued with pure faith and love to God. But the works, which we do before our justification, be not allowed and accepted before God, although they appear never so good and glorious in the sight of man. For after our justification only, begin we to work as the law of God requireth. Then we shall do all good works willingly, although not so exactly as the law requireth, by means of the infirmity of the flesh : nevertheless, by the merit and benefit of Christ, we, being sorry that we cannot do all things more exquisitely and duly, all our works shall be accepted and taken of God, as most exquisite, pure, and perfect.

Now they, that think they may come to justification by performance of the law, by their own deeds and merits, or by any

other mean, than is above rehearsed, they go from Christ, they renounce his grace, "Evacuati estis a Christo (saith St. Paul, Gal. v.), quicumque in lege justificamini, a gratia excidistis." (*Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*) They be not partakers of the justice that he hath procured, or the merciful benefits that be given by him. For St. Paul saith, a general rule for all them that will seek such by-paths to obtain justification; those (saith he) which will not acknowledge the justness or righteousness which cometh by God, but go about to advance their own righteousness, shall never come to that righteousness which we have by God; which is the righteousness of Christ, by whom only all the saints in heaven, and all others that have been saved, have been reputed righteous, and justified. So that to Christ, our only Saviour and Redeemer, of whose righteousness both their and our justification doth depend, is to be transcribed all the glory thereof. **ABP. CRANMER, (MARTYR.)**

Now then, when I have the grace to have in remembrance the circumcision of Christ, when I remember that Christ hath fulfilled the law for me, that he was circumcised, that he will stand between me and my damnation, when I look not upon my works, to be saved by them, but only by Christ; when I stick unto him, when I believe that my soul is washed and made clean through his blood, then I have all his goodness, for God hath given him unto me; and when I believe in him, I apply all his benefits unto me.

I pray God the Almighty to give every one of us such a heart that we may believe in him, for he is *the end of the law, the fulfilling of the same, to the salvation of all that believe on him*. What can be more comfortable? Therefore let us believe in him and be thankful. Now I must needs speak a word or two of good works, lest, peradventure, some of you be offended with me. I told you before wherein standeth our righteousness, namely, in this, that our unrighteousness is forgiven us; for we must needs confess, that the best works, that we do, have need of remission of sins, and so are not meritorious, for they be not perfect, as they ought to be; **AND THEREFORE WE LIVE OF BORROWING; WE HAVE NO PROPER RIGHTEOUSNESS**

OF OUR OWN; BUT WE BORROW, THAT IS TO SAY, WE TAKE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST, WHICH HE OFFERED FREELY TO AS MANY AS BELIEVE IN HIM. And this treasure of his righteousness is not wasted or spent; he hath enough for all the world, yea, if there were a thousand worlds. Therefore when we have been wicked, let us be sorry for our wickedness, and come to Christ, and call for forgiveness, and then take a good earnest purpose to leave sin.

There is a common saying amongst us here in England: 'Every thing is,' say they, 'as it is taken;' which, indeed, is not so; for every thing is as it is, howsoever it be taken, but in some manner of things it is true, as in this matter: we of ourselves are unjust, our works are imperfect, and so disagreeable unto God's laws; yet for Christ's sake we be taken for just, and our works are allowable before God; not that they be so indeed for themselves, but they be taken well for his sake. God hath a pleasure in our works, though they be not so perfectly done as they ought to be, yet they please him, and he delighteth in them and he will reward them in everlasting life. We have them not by our merits, but by Christ. And yet this sentence is true: *He will reward every one according to his deserving*; he will reward our good works in everlasting life, but not with everlasting life, for our works are not so much worth, nor ought not to be esteemed so as to get us heaven; for it is written, *The kingdom of heaven is the gift of God*. So likewise St. Paul saith, *Ye are saved freely without works*, Ephes. ii. 8. Therefore when ye ask, are ye saved? say yes. How? Marry, gratis, freely; and here is all our comfort to stay our consciences. You will say now, here is all faith, faith, but we hear nothing of good works; as some carnal people make such carnal reasons like themselves: but I tell you we are bound to walk in good works; for to that end we are come to Christ, to leave sin, to live uprightly, and so to be saved by him: but you must be sure to what end you must work, you must know how to esteem your good works. As if I fast and give alms, and think to be saved by it, I thrust Christ out of his seat; what am I the better when I do so? But I will tell you how ye shall do them. First, consider with yourselves how God hath delivered you out of the hands of the devil.

Now, to show yourselves thankful, and, in consideration that he commandeth you to do good works, ye must do them; and thereby we wrestle with sin. When the devil tempteth me, or in any wise moveth me to wickedness, then I must withstand and reprove it; and when he hath gotten at any time the victory, we must rise again, and be more wary afterward. And when thou feelest thyself feeble and weak, then call upon God, for he hath promised that he will help; there was never man yet, nor ever shall be, but he either hath, or shall find ease and comfort at God's hand, if he call upon him with a faithful heart. For, as St. Paul saith, *God is true, he will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength*, 1 Cor. x. If, therefore, we would once enter into a practice to overcome the devil, it were but an easy thing for us to do, if every one in his calling would direct his ways to Godward, and to do good works; as the parents in their calling to live quietly and godly together, and to bring up their youth in godliness; so likewise masters should show good examples, to keep their servants from idleness and wickedness. These are good works, when every one doth his calling, as God hath appointed him to do; but they must be done to the end to show ourselves thankful, and therefore they are called in Scripture *sacrifices of thanksgiving*; not to win heaven withal, for if we should do so, we should deny Christ our Saviour, despise and tread him under our feet. For to what purpose suffered he, when I shall by my good works merit heaven? as the Papists do, which deny him indeed, for they think to get heaven with their pilgrimages, and with running hither and thither. I PRAY YOU NOTE THIS, WE MUST FIRST BE MADE GOOD, BEFORE WE CAN DO GOOD. WE MUST FIRST BE MADE JUST, BEFORE OUR WORKS PLEASE GOD; FOR WHEN WE ARE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IN CHRIST, AND ARE MADE GOOD BY HIM, THEN COMETH OUR DUTY, THAT IS, TO DO GOOD WORKS, TO MAKE A DECLARATION OF OUR THANKFULNESS.

BP. LATIMER, (MARTYR.)

Paul declareth, that for the death and merits of Christ we be saved, and not by our own virtues. So that faith doth not only show us Christ that died, and now sitteth at the right hand of God; but also applieth the merits of this death unto us,

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and maketh Christ ours. Faith layeth nothing to gage unto the justice of God but the death of Christ, and thereupon claimeth mercy and God's promise, the remission of sin, and desireth God to justify and deliver the soul from the accusation of the law and right of the devil, which he is bound to do for his promise sake, Ezek. xxxiii. Matt. xvii. And although with this remission of sin he giveth likewise the Holy Ghost to work the will of God, to love both God and his neighbour, yet notwithstanding, the conscience, burdened and charged with sin, first seeketh remission thereof. For this thing the conscience laboureth and contendeth in all fears and terrors of sorrow and contrition. It disputeth not, what virtues it bringeth (wretched soul) to claim this promise of mercy; but, forsaking her own justice, offereth Christ, dead upon the cross, and sitting at God's right hand. It maketh nothing to be the cause, wherefore this mercy should be given, saving only the death of Christ, which is the only sufficient price and gage for sin.

And although it be necessary and requisite, that in the justification of a sinner contrition be present, and that necessarily charity and virtuous life must follow; yet doth the Scripture attribute the only remission of sin unto the mercy of God, which is given only for the merits of Christ, and received solely by faith. Paul doth not exclude those virtues to be present, but he excludeth the merits of those virtues, and deriveth the cause of our acceptance into the grace of God only for Christ.

And mark this manner of speech, *We are justified by faith*; that is, 'we are justified through the confidence of mercy.' This word, *faith*, doth comprehend as well a persuasion and confidence, that the promise of God appertaineth unto us for Christ's sake, as the knowledge of God. For faith, though it desire the company of contrition and sorrow for sin, yet contendeth it not in judgment upon the merits of any works, but only for the merits of Christ's death. In case it did, it availeth nothing; for if a man desire to be delivered from the law, the law must be satisfied, which saith, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and all thy heart, and all thy strength*, Deut. vi. Now there is not, nor ever was, any man born of the stock of Adam in original sin, that

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feared God, as much as the law requireth, nor ever had such constant faith as is required, or such ardent love as it requireth : seeing those virtues that the law required be infirm and weak : for their merits we can obtain nothing of God. We must therefore only trust to the merits of Christ, which satisfied the extreme jot and uttermost point of the law for us. And this his justice and perfection he imputeth and communicateth to us by faith.

Such as say, that faith only justifieth not, because other virtues be present, they cannot tell what they say. Every man that will have his conscience appeased, must mark these two things : *How* remission of sin is obtained, and *wherefore* it is obtained. Faith is the mean *whereby* it is obtained, and the cause *wherefore* it is received, is the merits of Christ. Although faith be the means *whereby* it is received, yet hath neither faith, nor charity, nor contrition, nor the word of God, nor all those knit together, sufficient merits *wherefore* we should obtain this remission of sin. But the only cause *wherefore* sin is forgiven, is the death of Christ.

Now mark the words of Paul : *Freely*, saith he, *we are justified by his grace*. Let the man burst his heart with contrition, believe that God is good a thousand times, and burn in charity, yet shall not all these satisfy the law, nor deliver man from the ire of God, until such time as faith letteth fall all hope and confidence in the merits of such virtues as be in man, and say, Lord, behold thy unfruitful servant ; only for the merits of Christ's blood give me remission of sins ; for I know no man can be justified otherwise before thee, as David saith, *No man living shall be justified in thy sight*, Ps. cxliii. And again, *Blessed is the man, to whom the Lord imputeth no sin*, Ps. xxxii.

BP. HOOPER, (MARTYR).

Whosoever desireth to be assured that he is one of the elect number of God, let him not climb up to heaven to know, but let him descend into himself, and there search his faith in Christ the Son of God ; which if he find in him not feigned, by the working of God's Holy Spirit accordingly, thereupon let him stay, and so wrap himself wholly, both body and soul, under God's general promise, and cumber his head with no further speculations, knowing this, *that whosoever believeth in him*

shall not perish, John iii ; *shall not be confounded*, Rom. ix ; *shall not see death*, John viii ; *shall not enter into judgment*, John v ; *shall have everlasting life*, John iii. vii ; *shall be saved*, Matt. xxviii. Acts xvi ; *shall have remission of all his sins*, Acts x ; *shall be justified*, Rom. iii. Gal. ii ; *shall have floods flowing out of him of water of life*, John vii ; *shall never die*, John xi ; *shall be raised in the last day*, John vi ; *shall find rest to his soul, and shall be refreshed*, Matt. xi.

Now then forasmuch as we see faith to be the ground, whereupon dependeth the whole condition of our justifying, let us discuss in like manner what is this faith, whereof the Scripture so much speaketh, for the more plain understanding of the simple. For many kinds there be of faith, as a man may believe every thing that is true, yet not every truth doth save, neither doth the believing of every truth justify a man. He that believeth that God created all things of nought, believeth truly ; he that believeth that God is a just God, that he is Omnipotent, that he is merciful, that he is true of promise, believeth well, and holdeth the truth ; so he that believeth that God hath his election from the beginning, and that he also is one of the same elect and predestinate, hath a good belief, and thinketh well ; but yet this belief alone, except it be seasoned with another thing, will not serve to salvation ; as it availed not the Jews, which so thought of themselves, and yet think to this day, to be only God's elect people.

Only the faith which availeth to salvation is that whose object is the body and passion of Jesus Christ crucified ; so that in the act of justifying, these two, faith and Christ, have a mutual relation, and must always concur together : faith as the action which apprehendeth, Christ as the object which is apprehended. For neither doth the passion of Christ save without faith ; neither doth faith help, except it be in Christ ; as we see the body of man sustained by bread and drink, not except the same be received, and conveyed into the stomach ; and yet neither doth the receiving of every thing sustain man's body, except it be meat and drink, which have power to give nourishment. In like sort, it is with faith ; for neither doth the believing of any thing save, but only faith in the blood of Christ ; neither again doth the same blood of Christ profit us, except

by faith it be received. And as the sun, being the cause of all light, shineth not but to them only which have eyes to see, nor yet to them neither, unless they will open their eyes to receive the light; so the passion of Christ is the efficient cause of salvation, but faith is the condition whereby the said passion is to be effectual. And that is the cause why we say with the Scripture, that faith only justifieth us, not excluding thereby all other external causes that go before faith, as grace, mercy, election, vocation, the death of Christ, &c. all which be external causes, working our salvation through faith. But when we say, that faith only justifieth us, the meaning thereof is this; that of all internal actions, motions, or operations in man, given to him of God, there is none other that contenteth and pleaseth God, nor standeth before his judgment, or can help any thing to the justifying of man before him, but only this one action of faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. For although the action of praying, fasting, alms, patience, charity, repentance, the fear and love of God, be high gifts in man, and not of man, given of God to man; yet be none of all these actions in man imputed of God to salvation; but only this one action of faith in man, upon Christ Jesus, the Son of God. Not that the action itself of believing, as it is a quality in man, doth so deserve, but because it taketh that dignity of the object. For, as I said, the act of justifying faith, as it is an action in man, is not to be considered alone, but must ever go with his object, and taketh his virtue thereof. Like as the looking up of the old Israelites did not of itself procure any health unto them, but the promise made in the object, which was the brazen serpent, whereupon they looked, gave them health by their looking up; even so, after the like sort, are we saved by our faith and spiritual looking up to the body of Christ crucified, which faith to define is this:

To believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of the living God, sent into this world, by his death to satisfy for our sins, and so to receive the same.

JOHN BRADFORD, (MARTYR.)

We believe and confess, concerning justification, that as it cometh only from God's mercy through Christ, so it is perceived and had of none, who be of years

of discretion, otherwise than by faith only: which faith is not an opinion, but a certain persuasion wrought by the Holy Ghost in the mind and heart of man; wherethrough, as the mind is illuminated, so the heart is supplied to submit itself to the will of God unfeignedly; and so sheweth forth an *inherent* righteousness, which is to be discerned in the article of justification from the righteousness which God endueth us withal in justifying us; although inseparably they go together. And this we do, not for curiosity, or contention sake; but for conscience sake, that it might be quiet; which it can never be, if we confound, without distinction, forgiveness of sin and Christ's justice imputed to us, with regeneration and inherent righteousness. By this, we disallow the papistical doctrine of free-will, of works of supererogation, of merits, of the necessity of auricular confession, and satisfaction to God-ward.

R. FERRAR, late bishop of St. David's.

ROWLAND TAYLOR. JOHN PHILPOT.

JOHN BRADFORD. LAURENCE SAUNDERS.

J. HOOPER, late bishop of Worcester.

EDWARD CROME. JOHN ROGERS.

EDMUND LAWRENCE, and J. P.—J. M.

MILES COVERDALE, late bishop of Exeter.*

I, Martin Luther, an unworthy preacher of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, thus profess, and thus believe; that this article, THAT FAITH ALONE, WITHOUT WORKS, CAN JUSTIFY BEFORE GOD, shall never be overthrown, neither by the Emperor, nor by the Turk, nor by the Tartar, nor by the Persian, nor by the Pope, with all his cardinals, bishops, sacrificers, monks, nuns, kings, princes, powers of the world, nor yet by all the devils in hell. This article shall stand fast, whether they will or no. This is the true Gospel. Jesus Christ redeemed us from our sins, and he only. This most firm and certain truth is the voice of Scripture, though the world and all the devils rage and roar. If Christ alone take away our sins, we cannot do this with our works; and as it is impossible to embrace Christ but by faith, it is, therefore, equally impossible to apprehend him by works. If then faith alone must apprehend Christ, *before* works can *follow*, the conclusion is irrefragable; that faith alone apprehends

* This is part of a brief Confession of Faith subscribed by the above, dated 8th May, 1554.—See *Biographia Evangelica*, i. 350.

him, before and without the consideration of works: and this is our justification and deliverance from sin. Then, and not till then, good works follow faith, as its necessary and inseparable fruit. This is the doctrine I teach; and this the Holy Spirit and Church of the Faithful have delivered. In this will I abide. Amen. LUTHER.

Wherefore let those which give themselves to the study of the holy Scripture, learn out of this saying, *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness*, to set forth truly and rightly this true Christian righteousness after this manner: that it is a faith and confidence in the Son of God, or rather a confidence of the heart in God through Jesus Christ: and let them add this clause as a difference; which faith and confidence is accounted righteousness for Christ's sake. For these two things (as I said before) work Christian righteousness: namely, faith in the heart, which is a gift of God, and assuredly believeth in Christ; and also that God accepteth this imperfect faith for perfect righteousness, for Christ's sake, in whom I have begun to believe. Because of this faith in Christ, God seeth not my doubting of his good-will towards me, my distrust, heaviness of spirit, and other sins which are yet in me. For as long as I live in the flesh, sin is truly in me. But because I am covered under the shadow of Christ's wings, as is the chicken under the wing of the hen, and dwell without all fear under that most ample and large heaven of the forgiveness of sins, which is spread over me, God covereth and pardoneth the remnant of sin in me: that is to say, because of that faith wherewith I began to lay hold upon Christ, he accepteth my imperfect righteousness even for perfect righteousness, and counteth my sin for no sin, which notwithstanding is sin indeed.

So we shroud ourselves under the covering of Christ's flesh, who is our *cloudy pillar for the day, and our pillar of fire for the night*, Exod. xiii. 21, lest God should see our sin. And although we see it, and for the same do feel the terrors of conscience, yet flying unto Christ our Mediator and Reconciler (through whom we are made perfect), we are sure and safe; for as all things are in him, so through him we have all things, who also doth supply whatsoever is wanting in us. When

we believe this, God winketh at the sins and remnants of sin yet sticking in our flesh, and so covereth them, as if they were no sin. Because, saith he, thou believest in my Son, although thou have many sins, yet notwithstanding they shall be forgiven thee, until thou be clean delivered from them by death.

Let Christians learn with all diligence to understand this article of Christian righteousness. And to this end let them read Paul, and read him again, both often and with great diligence, and let them compare the first with the last: yea, let them compare Paul wholly and fully with himself; then shall they find it to be true, that Christian righteousness consisteth in these two things; namely, in faith, which giveth glory unto God, and in God's imputation. For faith is weak (as I have said), and therefore God's imputation must needs be joined withal; that is to say, that God will not lay to our charge the remnant of sin; that he will not punish it, nor condemn us for it; but will cover it, and will freely forgive it, as though it were nothing at all; not for our sake, neither for our worthiness and works, but for Jesus Christ's sake in whom we believe.

Thus a Christian man is both righteous and a sinner, holy and profane; an enemy of God, and yet a child of God. These contraries no sophisters will admit, for they know not the true manner of justification. And this was the cause why they constrained men to work well so long, until they should feel in themselves no sin at all. Whereby they gave occasion to many (which, striving with all their endeavour to be perfectly righteous, could not attain thereunto) to become stark mad; yea, an infinite number also of those which were the authors of this devilish opinion, at the hour of death were driven unto desperation. Which thing had happened unto me also, if Christ had not mercifully looked upon me, and delivered me out of this error. LUTHER.

I perceive what is your difficulty on the subject of faith. You are entangled in Augustine's notion, who goes the length of denying that our natural righteousness (*rationis justitiam*) is counted for righteousness before God—and so far thinks rightly; but then supposes that we are accounted righteous (or justified) on the ground of that fulfilling of the law, which

the Holy Spirit produces in us. You think therefore that we are justified by faith, because by faith we receive the Holy Spirit, that we may become righteous by fulfilling the law through his influence and operation. This notion makes our own obedience, purity, or perfection to be our justifying righteousness; and such renovation, it is confessed, must follow faith. But do you, my friend, turn off your eyes from this object, and from the law altogether, and fix them on the promise and on Christ; and perceive that we are accounted righteous, that is, are accepted of God, and have peace of conscience, for Christ's sake, and not for that of our renovation to holiness. For this latter is not adequate to that end. We are justified by faith alone, not because of that grace's being, as you write, the root of all virtues, but because it lays hold on Christ, for whose sake we are accepted, whatever be the amount of our renovation—which indeed must necessarily follow, but is not the thing that gives peace to the conscience. Love therefore (though it is *the fulfilling of the law*,) is not that which justifies, but faith only—not as constituting any perfection in us, but as apprehending (or embracing) the Saviour. We are righteous, (or justified) not because of our fulfilling of the law, or our love, or our renovation, (though these are the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us,) but for the sake of Christ—whom we apprehend by faith alone.

Augustine does not fully come up to the meaning of St. Paul, though he approaches nearer to it than the schoolmen; and I cite him, because of the general opinion entertained concerning him, though he does not sufficiently explain the righteousness of faith.—Believe me, the controversy concerning this subject is momentous and difficult. You will however rightly understand it, if you entirely turn away your eyes from the law, and from Augustine's notion of fulfilling the law, and fix your thoughts altogether on the free promise; considering that we are justified, or accepted and find peace, through the promise (alone) and for the sake of Christ.—This is the true doctrine, which sets forth the glory of Christ, and wonderfully relieves and cheers the conscience. I have endeavoured to explain it in the 'Apology,' or Defence of the Confession of Augsburg: but I could not there speak so freely, because of the cavils

of our adversaries, as I now speak to you; though in fact, I (in each case) say the same thing.—How would the conscience ever enjoy peace and assured hope, if it had to reflect thus: 'Then at length we may be accounted righteous, when our renovation is perfected.' What else is this, but to be justified according to the law, and not according to free promise? In that discussion (the Confession or the Apology) I said, that to attribute justification *to love* is to attribute it to our own work—understanding by that, a work wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. For faith justifies not as a work of the renewing of the Holy Ghost in us, but (simply) as embracing the Saviour; for whose sake, and not because of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us, we are accepted to the favor of God.

MELANCTHON.

Sin being taken away, we are made the righteousness of God in Christ: for David speaking of this righteousness, saith, *Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven*. No man is blessed, but in the righteousness of God: every man whose sin is taken away, is blessed. Therefore every man whose sin is covered, is made the righteousness of God in Christ. This righteousness doth make us to appear most holy, most pure, most unblameable before him.

This then is the sum of that which I say: Faith doth justify; justification washeth away sin; sin removed, we are clothed with the righteousness which is of God; the righteousness of God maketh us most holy. Every of these I have proved by the testimony of God's own mouth; therefore I conclude, that faith is that which maketh us most holy; in consideration whereof, it is called in this place, 'our most holy Faith.'

To make a wicked and a sinful man most holy through his believing, is more than to create a world of nothing. Our faith most holy! Surely, Solomon could not shew the queen of Sheba so much treasure in all his kingdom as is lapt up in these words. O that our hearts were stretched out like tents, and that the eyes of our understanding were as bright as the sun, that we might thoroughly know the riches of the glorious inheritance of the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards us, whom he accepteth for pure, and most holy, through our believing! O that the Spirit of the

Lord would give this doctrine entrance into the stony and brazen heart of the Jew, which followeth the law of righteousness, but cannot attain unto the righteousness of the law! Wherefore, saith the Apostle, they seek righteousness, and not by faith; wherefore they stumble at Christ, they are bruised, shivered to pieces, as a ship that hath run herself upon a rock. O that God would cast down the eyes of the proud, and humble the souls of the high-minded! that they might at the length abhor the garments of their own flesh, which cannot hide their nakedness; and put on the faith of Christ Jesus, as he did put it on, which hath said, *Doubtless I think all things but loss, for the excellent knowledge-sake of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have counted all things loss, and do judge them to be dung, that I might win Christ, and might be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God through faith.* O that God would open the ark of mercy, wherein this doctrine lieth, and set it wide before the eyes of poor afflicted consciences, which fly up and down upon the water of their afflictions, and can see nothing but only the gulf and deluge of their sins, wherein there is no place for them to rest their feet. The God of pity and compassion give you all strength and courage, every day, and every hour, and every moment, to build and edify yourselves in this most pure and holy faith.

HOOKE.

St. Paul and St. James reconciled.

BUT they say we have more work on our hands, with James: who contradicts us in the plainest terms. For he teaches, that *Abraham was justified by works*, and that we all are *in like manner justified by works; not by faith only*. What then? Do they mean to drag forth Paul to fight the question out with James? If they hold James to be a minister of Christ, his meaning must so be taken, that it may not be at variance with Christ speaking by the mouth of Paul. The Spirit by the mouth of Paul affirms, that *Abraham obtained his justification by faith, not by works*. We in like manner hold, that all *are justified by faith, without the works of the law*. The same Spirit affirms by James, that both *Abraham's righteousness* and *ours* consists of *works, not of faith only*. That the Spirit does not contradict itself is

certain. What is the agreement then in the system of these men who oppose us? With them it is quite enough if they tear up the doctrine of justification by faith, which we maintain to have its hold by the deepest roots. To discover a ground for their own consciences to repose upon, is with them no great concern. Upon this principle, you may perceive them running down the doctrine of justification by faith, but in the mean time setting up no fixed point of righteousness, at which their consciences may have rest. Let them triumph then as highly as they please to triumph, while they have no better victory than this to shew, that they have abolished all dependance on which justification stands. And a miserable victory truly they will possess, when, the light of truth having been by them put out, God shall have permitted them to spread darkness all around them. On which side soever the truth of God shall stand, they will get no ground by their pursuit. I deny therefore that James's opinion, which they continually hold like Achilles's shield in our faces, stands them in any stead at all. To make this plain, it is proper, in the first place, to mark what are the Apostle's views; then to notice where it is they stumble. As there were, in those days, many who constitute a mischief perpetual in the church, who manifestly detected their want of faith, by disregarding the works of faithful men, and yet would not give over boasting of the false name of faith, the Apostle here eludes their foolish audacity. Therefore it is not his purpose to derogate in the least degree from the value of true faith, but to shew how widely from the purpose these triflers go, in arrogating so much to the unsubstantial name of faith, that being satisfied with it, they fearlessly abandon themselves to all dissoluteness of vice. This state of the argument being considered, it becomes easy to see where our adversaries stumble. For they snare themselves in a two-fold paralogism. One paralogism lies in the double use of *faith*, the other in that of the word *justify*. While the Apostle denominates as faith, an unsubstantial notion far from the nature of true faith, he does it in the way of concession, which derogates nothing from his cause. Of this he leaves no question from the beginning, as instanced in the following words: *What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man shall say he hath faith and have not works?* He does not say, if

a man *have* faith without works, but if he *boasts* it. He expresses the same sentiment still more plainly a little further, where he makes such faith, in the way of ridicule, of less value than the knowledge of the devils; and last of all, where he calls it dead. But from the definition that he lays down, you might abundantly collect his meaning. *You believe*, he says, *that there is one God*. In very truth, if no other article is contained within this faith, it is no wonder that it does not justify. Nor are we to think, that when that property is denied concerning it, any derogation is made from Christian faith, which is widely different in its nature. For in what other way does true faith justify, than while it joins us closely with Christ; so that being become one with him, we are sharers in the benefit of his righteousness? Hence it does not therefore justify us because it affords some notion of the attributes of God, but because it rests upon the assurance of his mercy.

But we have not yet hit the mark we aimed at, unless we clear away the other paralogism arising from James placing part of justification in works. If you would make James consistent with the other parts of Scripture and with himself, it is necessary to understand the word *justify* in another sense from that in which it is used by Paul. For we are said by Paul to be justified, when the memory of our unrighteousness being blotted out, we are reputed as righteous men. If James had had this sense in view, he would have distorted the parts of his argument, when he made his citation from Moses,—*Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness*. For thus he works it in: Abraham obtained righteousness by works, because he did not hesitate to offer up his son when God commanded him; and so the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, *that he believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*. If it is an absurdity that the effect should come before its cause, either Moses falsely testifies in the place alluded to, that faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness, or he did not obtain his righteousness from that obedience which he shewed in the offering up of Isaac. Abraham was justified by his faith, while Ishmael was not yet conceived; who was grown to man's estate before Isaac was born. How then shall we say that he acquired his justification, by an obedience which followed a long time after? Where-

fore either James falsely inverts the order of facts, which it is impious to suppose; or he did not mean so to say, that he was justified, as that he had deserved to be accounted just. What then? Without all doubt he speaks of the declaration of justification, not the imputation. As if he should say, 'Those who are justified by true faith prove their righteousness by obedience and good works, not by the bare imaginary name of faith.' In fine, he is not agitating the question by what means we are made righteous, but he demands a working righteousness from believing men. And just as Paul contends that we are made just without the help of works, he does not allow those persons to be accounted just, who are without good works. The consideration of this his object will set us free from every difficulty; for our adversaries are principally mistaken in this part, that they imagine James is laying down a definition of justification, while there is nothing else he is laboring to accomplish than to pull down the ill-grounded security of those who vainly spread the plea of faith as a cover to excuse their contempt of good works. So then let them torture James's words in whatever way they please, they will get out of them nothing further than the two following maxims: that the empty imitation of faith does not justify; and that the faithful man, not satisfied with such a show, declares his righteousness by his good works.

CALVIN.

Nature of Justifying Faith.

FOR that faith which bringeth forth, without repentance, either evil works, or no good works, is not a right, pure, and lively faith; but a dead, devilish, counterfeit, and feigned faith; as St. Paul and St. James call it. For even the devils know and believe that Christ was born of a virgin; that he fasted forty days and forty nights without meat and drink; that he wrought all kinds of miracles, declaring himself very God: they believe also, that Christ for our sakes suffered a most painful death, to redeem us from everlasting death; and that he rose again from death the third day: they believe that he ascended into heaven; and that he sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and at the last end of this world shall come again, and judge both the quick and the dead. These articles of our faith the devils believe: and so they believe all

things that be written in the New and Old Testament to be true: and yet for all this faith they be but devils; remaining still in their damnable estate, lacking the very true Christian faith.

For the right and true Christian faith is, not only to believe that Holy Scripture, and all the aforesaid articles of our faith, are true; but also to have a sure trust and confidence in God's merciful promises, to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ: whereof doth follow a loving heart to obey his commandments. And this true Christian faith neither any devil hath; nor yet any man, which in the outward profession of his mouth, and in his outward receiving of the sacraments, in coming to the church, and in all other outward appearances seemeth to be a Christian man, and yet in his living and deeds sheweth the contrary.

For how can a man have this true faith, this sure trust and confidence in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins be forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God, and to be partaker of the kingdom of heaven by Christ; when he liveth ungodlily, and denieth Christ in his deeds? Surely no such ungodly man can have this faith and trust in God. For as they know Christ to be the only Saviour of the world; so they know also that wicked men shall not enjoy the kingdom of God. They know that God hateth unrighteousness: that he will destroy all those that speak untruly, Ps. v. 6: that those which have done good works, which cannot be done without a lively faith in Christ, shall come forth into the resurrection of life: and those that have done evil shall come unto the resurrection of judgment. Very well they know also, that to them that be contentious, and to them that will not be obedient unto the truth, but will obey unrighteousness, shall come indignation, wrath, and affliction, &c.

Therefore to conclude: Considering the infinite benefits of God, shewed and given unto us mercifully without our deserts;—who hath not only created us of nothing, and from a piece of vile clay, of his infinite goodness hath exalted us, as touching our soul, unto his own similitude and likeness; but also, whereas we were condemned to hell, and death everlasting, hath given his own natural Son, being God eternal, immortal, and equal unto himself in power and glory, to be incarnated; and to take our mortal nature upon him, with the infir-

mities of the same; and in the same nature to suffer most shameful and painful death for our offences, to the intent to justify us, and to restore us to life everlasting; so making us also his dear children, brethren unto his only Son our Saviour Christ, and inheritors for ever with him of his eternal kingdom of heaven:—These great and merciful benefits of God, if they be well considered, do neither minister unto us occasion to be idle, and to live without doing any good works; neither yet stir us up by any means to do evil things: but contrariwise, if we be not desperate persons, and our hearts harder than stones, they move us to render ourselves unto God wholly; with all our will, hearts, might, and power to serve him in all good deeds; obeying his commandments during our lives; to seek in all things his glory and honor, not our sensual pleasures and vain glory; evermore dreading willingly to offend such a merciful God and loving Redeemer, in word, thought, or deed. And the said benefits of God, deeply considered, move us for his sake also to be ever ready to give ourselves to our neighbours; and, as much as lieth in us, to study with all our endeavour to do good to every man.

These be the fruits of true faith:—To do good as much as lieth in us to every man: and, above all things, and in all things, to advance the glory of God: of whom only we have our sanctification, justification, salvation, and redemption; to whom be ever glory, praise, and honor, world without end. *Amen.*

HOMILY ON SALVATION.

Imputed Righteousness Explained.

IMPUTED righteousness is not God's accounting us righteous when we are not so; for that would be a false judgment, and utterly inconsistent with the truth, wisdom, and righteousness of the divine nature: but, first, the righteousness of Christ is become ours, by the conveyance which God hath appointed to make it over unto us; and, then, it is imputed or reckoned for our justification.

For the imputation of Christ's righteousness is not *res vana*, that which may agree with any person in any state and condition; as if there were no more required to justify the most profligate sinner, but only that God reckon him righteous: no; but there must be something presupposed in us, either as a qualifica-

tion, condition, or means, that must give us a title to the righteousness of Christ. And that is, as shall appear in the next position, the grace of faith: so that, Christ's righteousness being made ours by faith, God doth then actually impute it to our justification. And, therefore, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is not by God only thought to be ours; but it is ours really and truly, in a law sense. To affirm, that God imputes that to be ours which indeed is not, would be to make it only a putative righteousness, to invade the divine verity, and to lay the imputation of a false and partial judgment upon him. The righteousness of Christ is not ours, because God accounts it to be so; but, on the contrary, therefore God accounts it ours, because it is so. It becomes not ours, by God's imputation; for it must be ours, before any act of imputation can be true and just; but rather, it becomes ours, by divine designation or donation, whereby God hath made over the righteousness of his Son as a dowry and patrimony to faith. God doth not justify us, that we may be righteous; but because we are already righteous: and that, not only imperfectly, by the inherent righteous qualities that are implanted in our regeneration; but most perfectly, by the righteousness of Christ consigned over unto us in our regeneration, by virtue of faith, which is a main part of it. Certainly, that God, who hath told us, that *he that justifieth the wicked is an abomination unto him*, Prov. xvii. 15, will never himself make that the process of his justice. It is true, the Apostle saith, that God *justifieth the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5; but this must be understood, either in a limited sense, for those who are in part so, being but in part sanctified: or, rather, it must be understood, not in a compounded sense, as if ungodliness and justification were states compatible to the same person; but in a divided sense, that is, that he justifies such who heretofore were ungodly; but their sanctification intervenes between their ungodliness and their justification. In which order the Apostle recounts it, 1 Cor. vi. 11, *Such were some of you: but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified*. So that, in order of nature, faith, which is a principal part of our sanctification, precedes our right to Christ's righteousness, because it conveys it; and our right to Christ's righteousness precedes God's ac-

tual imputation of it to our justification, because it must first be ours, before it can be with truth accounted so.

It is very wonderful, that the Papists should so obstinately resolve not to understand this doctrine of imputed righteousness; but still cavil against it, as a contradiction. It being, say they, as utterly impossible to become righteous through the righteousness of another, as to become healthful through another's health, or wise by another's wisdom. And some, besides this slander of a contradiction, give us this scoff into the bargain: That the Protestants, in defending an imputative righteousness, shew only an imputative modesty and imputative learning. But they might do well to consider that some denominations are physical; others only legal and juridical. Those, which are physical, do indeed necessarily require inexistent forms, from which the denominations should result: thus, to be healthful, and to be wise and learned, do require inherent health, wisdom, and learning. But, to be righteous, may be taken either in a physical sense, and so it denotes an inherent righteousness, which in the best is imperfect; or else it may be taken in a forensic or juridical sense, and so the perfect righteousness of another, who is our Surety, may become ours, and be imputed to our justification. It is the righteousness of another, personally: it is our righteousness, juridically: because, by faith, we have a right and title to it; which right and title accrue unto us, by the promise and covenant of God, and our union to our Surety.

Indeed, some there are, who refer our justification wholly to the merits of Jesus Christ; but yet lay down a scheme and method of this doctrine, not altogether so honorable to our blessed Saviour as they ought. These affirm, that Christ, by his righteousness, hath merited that God should account our faith to be itself our righteousness: that his is only the procaccartarctic or meritorious cause procuring this grand privilege to faith, that it should itself be our righteousness and the matter of our justification. Wherein they are so far injurious to the merits of our blessed Saviour, as to make them only the remote cause of our justification; and, consequently, necessary, rather that faith might have an object, than that we might have righteousness. However, this, which hath

been spoken, may serve to give us a more clear and distinct notion of imputed righteousness; which is not ours, merely because God imputes it to us; but because he hath, by deed of gift in his promise, bestowed it upon us when we believe, and then imputes it to our justification.

BR. HOPKINS.

The Imputation of Christ's Righteousness agreeable to Scripture, and to the Doctrine of the Church of England.

THOUGH you are pleased to say, That neither our Church, nor Scripture, say any thing of such imputation; yet I shall, in short, say a few things, which, if impartially considered, may possibly convince you of error in this particular, or abate your confidence in asserting it. And here consider,

1. What the 11th Article of our Church says: We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of Christ Jesus, by faith. 1. Here it is to be considered, that the word *λογίζεσθαι*, which occurs eleven times in one chapter, Rom. iv. is, by the Latin translators and expositors, rendered sometimes by *imputare*, or *reputare*, or *adjudicare*, or *æstimare*. And by our church counted, (so our English version, (Rom. iv. 3. 5.) accounted, (Art. 11.) or reckoned (Rom. iv. 4, 9, 10.) So that in the judgment of our church, these three words are synonymous, and signify the same thing in our English idiom, that *λογίζεσθαι* does in the Greek, or *imputare*, or *reputare* in the Latin. 2. By the merits of Christ Jesus, in the Article, his justice is understood; in that by his meritorious death and passion, he satisfied the Father's justice for us, and paid the full price of our redemption.* 3. When our Article says, That we are accounted righteous before God, it is certain, that as God only justifies, Rom. viii. 33. iv. 5., so it is he only who counts, accounts, and reckons us righteous, and *imputes*, Rom. iv. 6. (which word I omitted a little before,) Christ's righteousness to us, by which alone we can be justified *coram Deo*. 4. That the true sense, then, and meaning of our Article is evidently this: God, who only justifies, imputes his Son's justice or righteousness to us, for whom only he performed it; and for it, accounts or reckons us just before himself at his tribunal.

* So our Homily explains it, in the 1st part of the Sermon of Salvation, p. 14.

This imputing, or accounting our blessed Saviour's righteousness to believing Christians for their justification, is fully expressed in our Homily of Salvation, in the conclusion of it, thus, 'So that Christ is now the righteousness of all them who truly believe in him. He for them paid their ransom, by his death. He for them fulfilled the law in his life; so that in and by him, every true Christian may be called a fulfiller of the law; for as much as what they lacked, Christ's justice hath supplied.' (Hom. of Salvation, part 1. page 15). By the premises, I think it may be manifest, that Christ is our righteousness; and the text expressly says, Jer. xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30., that his righteousness is ours; and so far ours, that his justice hath supplied the want of our righteousness: and we are looked upon by our gracious Father, in and by Christ Jesus, and for his justice performed for us, as if we had perfectly fulfilled the law; and so, by and for his righteousness we are, *coram Deo*, justified. Now it is manifest that this righteousness of our blessed Saviour and Surety cannot possibly be ours by infusion; men neither are, nor can be the subject of it, and therefore it must, of necessity, be ours by imputation only; God accepting it for us, and graciously imputing it to us.

2. And what our church, and all reformed churches, say concerning the imputation of our blessed Saviour's righteousness, they have evident ground in Scripture for it, and that in both the New and Old Testament. This righteousness (for of it St. Paul speaks,) *being testified by the law and the prophets*; Rom. iii. 21. That this, which you unadvisedly deny, may further appear, I consider, 1. That the righteousness we are speaking of, is that which justifies, not *coram hominibus*, but *coram Deo*; and, 2. This righteousness may be two-fold. 1. *Justitia operum*, a righteousness internal and inherent in the subject it justifies; and is therefore called our own righteousness, being the effect and product of our own works; so the holy angels are, and Adam, while he stood, was just. 2. *Justitia Gratiæ*, Rom. iii. 24. *et imputata*, Rom. iv. 3, 5, &c. which is external, and not inherent in the subject it denominates and constitutes just. So we say, that our blessed Saviour's righteousness, though in him, and external to us, is imputed to believing sinners. And this imputed righteousness is in Scripture

called, 1. *Justitia fidei*, Rom. iv. 13; ix. 30, 32; x. 6. because faith is that which alone receives, and makes it ours, John i. 12; Rom. iii. 22, 25. 2. It is usually called *Justitia Dei*; Rom. i. 17; iii. 22; x. 3; Phil. iii. 9. because God sent his Son to die for us, accepts his sacrifice of himself, and the satisfaction given by it, and imputes it to us, Rom. iv. 6. So that by it, he is reconciled to us, does not impute our sins to us,* but, for his Son's sacrifice and satisfaction, absolves and justifies us. 3. It is called *Justitia Christi*; because it was wrought in, and by him, but for us. For all his obedience, active and passive, which as man, and our mediator, he performed, was to free us from sin, and the punishment of it. It was for us, and our salvation, he came† down and died, John iii. 15, 16. He was the Lamb of God, John i. 29. ὁ αἰψων, qui tulit, pertulit, abstulit, who has taken away our sins. He was, by his Father's, (2 Cor. v. 21) and his own, (Heb. x. 7) will and consent, made a sacrifice for our sins;‡ and did not only bear our sins, i. e. *pœnas peccatis debitas*, but he put them away, Heb. ix. 28. and abolished them, Heb. ix. 26. purchased reconciliation, and peace with God, Col. i. 20. which was presignified expressly in the law, Lev. xvi. 21, 22; 2 Chron. xxix. 24. *So that we have redemption by his blood, even the remission of our sins*, Col. i. 14. Rom. iii. 24, 25; Eph. i. 7. That is, by and for our blessed Saviour's satisfaction, we are absolved from our sins, and *coram Deo* justified. Our blessed Saviour, as the Apostle tells us, *humbled himself and became obedient unto death, wherefore God hath highly exalted him*, &c. Phil. ii. 8. This obedience of Jesus Christ, so highly pleasing to his Father, was that righteousness which he performed himself, but for us, as our Surety and Mediator. He had undertaken to pay our debt, by undergoing the punishment due to us, and he fully and justly paid it: and this his justice, being the justice of our surety, and performed only for us, became ours, and we, by it, justified *coram Deo*: it being impossible that our just God should condemn, or require of us that debt, which our Surety and Saviour had fully paid. And for the further evidencing the imputation of our blessed Saviour's righteousness for our justification; it is to be considered,

3. That he is called our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6. because his satisfaction given to his Father's justice for our sins, accepted of God, and imputed to us, is made our righteousness, by which we are justified. Whence it is, that the Apostle says, *We are justified by his blood*, Rom. v. 9. not by works, *and by faith in his blood*, Rom. iii. 25. *and through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ*, Rom. iii. 24. It is not any works, or inherent righteousness in us; but his righteousness, by and for which we have remission of our sins, and consequently justification. And if you desire to know how this righteousness of our blessed Saviour and Surety becomes ours? the Apostle tells you, it is God who makes it so. *Of him are ye in Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness*, &c. 1 Cor. i. 30. It is certain, and by learned men confessed, that those words, ἀπὸ Θεοῦ, must be repeated ἐκ κοινοῦ, with every one of those words σοφία ἀπὸ Θεοῦ, and δικαιοσύνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ, &c. The righteousness of our blessed Saviour was by him, as our surety, performed only for us, and by his heavenly Father accepted, reckoned, or imputed to us, and is the only cause and motive for which he justifies us.

4. If Titius owe you a thousand pounds upon bond, and Sempronius be bound with him for the payment of it: suppose Titius be insolvent, having nothing, or not near enough, to pay that sum, and be laid in prison. If in this case Sempronius, his surety, pay that whole sum, this payment performed by his surety will, and in law and justice must, be imputed to Titius, and absolutely free him from that debt and imprisonment: and if he be brought before the judge for non-payment of that money, he must, for what his surety has done for him, be *coram judice* absolved and justified. We are all sinners (the case, as to the justice and equity of it, is the same), and so become slaves to sin, and in captivity to Satan; we have contracted a great debt, *debitum pœnæ æternæ*, which is impossible for us ever to pay. Our blessed Saviour is our surety,* and pays our whole debt, and the full price of our redemption, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; which being paid solely

* 2 Cor. v. 19. And so our Homily, pt. 2. page 183. in the Second Sermon of the Passion.

† Ita Symbolum Constantinopolitanum.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 21. ἡ ἀμαρτία, i. e. περὶ ἀμαρτίας, Sacrificium pro peccato.

* Heb. vii. 22. κρείττονος διαθήκης γέγονεν ἔγνους ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

and only for us (for our blessed Redeemer had no debt of his own to pay, save only as our surety), this payment, though performed by another, is imputed to us; so as we have the benefit of it, and being free from sin and punishment, are, *coram Deo*, justified. And that you may see how inconsiderately you say, that Scripture has nothing of our blessed Saviour's imputed righteousness, I desire you to consider,

5. That the evangelical prophet Isaiah, speaking of our blessed Saviour, hath these words: *He (Jesus Christ) hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows: he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.* And it follows, *The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 4-6. And a little after, *For the transgression of my people was he stricken*, ver. 8. Where I shall only observe, what is evidently in the text, these four particulars,

1. That God imputed our sins to his Son, *The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all*; and *It pleased the Lord to bruise him*, &c.

2. That they were imputed to him, *Non quoad culpam, sed pœnam*. He was absolutely innocent; it was our iniquities and our transgressions. We only were the sinful cause and subject of those sins. The sins were only ours, and the punishment and suffering for them only his.

3. And as God imputed our sins to our blessed Saviour, *quoad pœnam*, so that he suffered the punishment due to us for them; so he imputeth our Saviour's sufferings and satisfaction to us, *quoad beneficium et justitiam*. So that by and for his sufferings and the righteousness of his satisfaction, we receive absolution, remission of our sins, and justification. For so the text tells us, *By his stripes we are healed*. Our sins are wounds and sicknesses of our soul, and his merits, applied by a lively faith, the only plaster and physic which could cure them. It is not our works or any inherent righteousness, which can cure and justify us; but it must be a righteousness imputed by God. *That man is blessed, or justified*, says the Apostle, *unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works*, Rom. iv. 6. And that righteousness which God thus imputes, is not, as I said, any inherent righteousness of our works; but the righteousness of his Son and our blessed Saviour; *whom God hath set forth to be*

a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of our sins, Rom. iii. 24, 25. 20. It is his imputed righteousness, not any works of ours, for which we have remission of our sins, or justification before God. 'Sicut Christo, inobedientiæ nostræ sibi a Deo imputatæ, supplicium, et pœna; ita nobis obedientiæ Christi nobis imputatæ, Beneficium et justitia cessit.' The Apostle expressly says the same thing: *God hath made him (his Son) to be sin (that is, a sacrifice for sin) for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*.* Our sins were imputed to him by God, that his righteousness, which alone is called the righteousness of God, might be made ours. . . .

4. It follows in that place of Isaiah thus, *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities*, Isa. liii. 11. 1. His knowledge (non effectivè aut subjectivè, cujus Christus est principium et subjectum). Not that knowledge inherent in him, of which he is the subject and principle; but his knowledge *objectivè*, or the knowledge of him, of which he is the object, that is, our knowledge of him by a lively faith: which our blessed Saviour means, where he saith, *This is eternal life to know thee, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ*, John xvii. 3. 2. *My righteous servant*. There is in our blessed Saviour a two-fold righteousness; (1.) *Justitia absoluta*, which is his personal righteousness, as the Son of God; whether by an eternal or temporal generation: the first, his righteousness as God; the second, as man. For, as man, he was the Son of God, made under the law, Luke i. 35. and by the obligation of the natural or moral law, bound to fulfil all the righteousness required by that law, and that for himself. (2.) *Justitia relativa*, his righteousness, as he was our surety; and so his righteousness did consist in exactly doing and suffering all those things his Father required, and he undertook to do and suffer for us as our surety. And this is that righteousness which is imputed to us for our justification, *coram Deo*. 3. When the text says, *He shall bear our iniquities*; the meaning is, he shall bear the punishment due to us for our iniquities.

* 2 Cor. v. 21. On which place Isidore Clarius, although a Papist, says thus: Pro nobis filium peccatum fecit, id est hostiam pro peccato; ut nos efficeremur justitia Dei in eo. Hoc est, ut nos efficeremur justi apud Deum, per ipsum Christum.

So that the prophet, in plain English, says thus: 'My righteous servant, or surety for my people, shall by his knowledge, or a lively faith in him, justify many; for he shall bear, and (for them) suffer the punishment otherwise due to them for their sins.' Where the sufferings and satisfaction of our blessed Saviour, which, as our surety, he perfectly accomplished for us, are by the prophet assigned for the only cause and meritorious motive of our justification. This granted, (as of necessity it must,) I argue thus, That external righteousness, for which alone we are justified *coram Deo*, must of necessity be imputed to us; for being external, and no way inherent in us, it cannot any other way affect us, so that we can have the benefit of it, save only by imputation. But the righteousness of our blessed Saviour and Surety is an external righteousness, for which alone we are justified *coram Deo*; ergo, it is and must be imputed to us, Q. E. D.

5. Lastly, Though you confidently say, 'That there is nothing in Scripture to prove that our blessed Saviour's righteousness is imputed to us for our justification;' yet had you diligently read and understood that one chapter, and the few verses of it here cited in the margin, Rom. v. 15-19. you would or might have found reason enough to have abated your great confidence, and rectified your dangerous mistake; and, upon second thoughts, I hope you will. In this place, the Apostle institutes a collation between Adam, the type, Rom. v. 14. and our blessed Saviour, the antitype, or between the first and second Adam, as the Apostle elsewhere calls them, 1 Cor. xv. 45, &c. By the first, we have sin and condemnation; by the second, our blessed Saviour, grace, and the gift of grace, righteousness and justification.* The words of the Apostle, which, amongst others, may deserve your consideration, are these: *As by one offence* (or the offence of one, of Adam) *judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by one righteousness* (or the righteousness of one, of Jesus Christ) *the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.* And then it follows, *As by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience† of one shall*

many be made righteous. Whence, I conceive it evident, that it is not our own works or obedience, but the obedience and righteousness of our blessed Saviour and Surety, performed only for us, (for that innocent Lamb having no sins of his own, died only for ours,) by which we are justified before God. And seeing this righteousness and obedience is extrinsical to us, our blessed Saviour being both the principle and subject of it, it can be no way ours, but only by imputation. And hence it follows, that we are justified before God by no inherent, but only by our blessed Saviour and Surety's imputed righteousness, Q. E. D. BR. BARLOW.

The Uses to be made of the Doctrine of Christ's Righteousness Imputed.

Now of this doctrine of *justification by Christ's righteousness imputed* we may make a double use. First, it may teach us that great duty of self-denial: we see no righteousness will justify us but Christ's, and *his* will not consist but with the denial of our own. And surely whatever the professions of men in word may be, there is not any one duty in all Christian religion of more difficulty than this, to trust Christ only with our salvation. To do holy duties of hearing, reading, praying, meditating, alms-giving, or any other actions of charity or devotion, and yet still to abhor ourselves and our works; to esteem ourselves, after we have done all, unprofitable servants, and worthy of many stripes; to do good things, and not to rest in them; to own the shame and dung of our solemn services: when we have done all the good works we can, to say with Nehemiah, *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy*, Nehem. xiii. 22. and with David, *To thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for Thou renderest to every man according to his work*, Psal. lxi. 12. It is thy mercy to reward us according to the uprightness of our works, who mightest in judgment confound us for the imperfection of our works. To give God the praise of our working, and to take to ourselves the shame of polluting his works in us. There is no doctrine so diametrically contrary to the merits of Christ, and the redemption of the world thereby, as justification by works. No Papist in the world is or can be more con-

* Rom. v. ubi donum Gratiae, ver. 15. est Remissio peccati, ver. 16. et justitia Christi, ver. 17.

† Obedience to death, even the death of the cross, Phil. ii. 8. which was properly the obedience of Christ as our Surety and Mediator, performed not for himself, but only for us.

tentious for good works than we both in our doctrine and in our prayers, and in our exhortations to the people. We say, no faith justifieth us before God but a working faith, no man is righteous in the sight of men, nor to be esteemed, but by works of holiness; without holiness no man shall see God; he that is Christ's is zealous of good works, purifieth himself even as he is pure, and walketh as he did in this world. Here only is the difference: we do them, because they are our duty, and testifications of our love and thankfulness to Christ, and of the workings of his Spirit in our hearts; but we dare not trust in them, as that by which we hope to stand or fall before the tribunal of God's justice, because they are at best mingled with our corruptions, and therefore do themselves stand in need of a high-priest to take off their iniquity. We know enough in Christ to depend on, we never can find enough in ourselves. And this confidence we have, if God would ever have had us justified by works, he would have given us grace enough to fulfil the whole law, and not have left a prayer upon public record for us every day to repeat, and to regulate all our own prayers by, *Forgive us our trespasses*. For how dares that man say, I shall be justified by my works, who must every day say, *Lord forgive me my sins, and be merciful unto me a sinner*. Nay though we could fulfil the whole law perfectly, yet from the guilt of sins formerly contracted we could no other way be justified, than by laying hold by faith on the satisfaction and sufferings of Christ.

Secondly, it may teach us confidence against all sins, corruptions, and temptations. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, &c.* Satan is the blackest enemy, and sin is the worst thing he can allege against me, or my soul is or can be subject unto; for *Hell is not so evil as sin*. Inasmuch as hell is of God's making, but sin only of mine; hell is made against me, but sin is committed against God. Now I know Christ came to destroy the works, and to answer the arguments and reasonings of the devil: thou canst not stand before God, saith Satan, for thou art a grievous sinner, and he is a devouring fire. But faith can answer, Christ is able both to cover and to cure my sin, to make it vanish as a mist, and

to put it as far out of mine own sight, as the east is from the west. But thou hast nothing to do with Christ, thy sins are so many and so foul. Surely the blood of Christ is more acceptable to my soul and much more honorable and precious in itself, when it covereth a multitude of sins. Paul was a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious, the greatest of all sinners; and yet he obtained mercy, that he might be for a pattern of all long-suffering to those that should after believe in Christ. If I had as much sin upon my soul as thou hast, yet faith could unlade them all upon Christ, and Christ could swallow them all up in his mercy. But thou hast still nothing to do with him, because thou continuest in thy sin. But doth he not call me, invite me, beseech me, command me to come unto him? If then I have a heart to answer his call, he hath a hand to draw me to himself, though all the gates of hell, and powers of darkness, or sins of the world stood between. But thou obeyest not this call. True indeed and pitiful it is, that I am dull of hearing, and slow of following the voice of Christ; I want much faith: but yet, Lord, thou dost not use to quench the smoking flax, or to break the bruised reed; I believe, and thou art able to help my unbelief. I am resolved to venture my soul upon thy mercy, to throw away all mine own loading, and to cleave only to this plank of salvation. But faith purifieth the heart, whereas thou art unclean still. True indeed, and miserable man I am therefore, that the motions of sin do work in my members. But yet, Lord, I hate every false heart; I delight in thy law with mine inner man; I do that which I would not, but I consent to thy law that it is good; I desire to know thy will, to fear thy name, and to follow thee whithersoever thou leadest me. But these are but empty velleities, the wishings and wouldings of an evil heart. Lord, to me belongeth the shame of my failings; but to thee belongeth the glory of thy mercy and forgiveness. Too true it is that I do not all I should: but do I allow myself in any thing that I should not? do I make use of mine infirmities to justify myself by them, or shelter myself under them, or dispense with myself in them? Though I do not the things I should, yet I love them, and delight in them; my heart, and spirit, and all the desires of my soul are towards them; I hate, abhor, and fight with myself for not doing them. I am ashamed of

mine infirmities, as the blemishes of my profession; I am weary of them, and groan under them as the burdens of my soul: I have no lust, but I am willing to know it; and when I know, to crucify it. I hear of no further measure of grace, but I admire it, and hunger after it, and press on to it. I can take Christ and affliction, Christ and persecution together. I can take Christ without the world, I can take Christ without myself. I have no unjust gain, but I am ready to restore it. No time have I lost by earthly business from God's service, but I am ready to redeem it. I have followed no sinful pleasure, but I am ready to abandon it, no evil company but I mightily abhor it. I never swear an oath, but I can remember it with a bleeding conscience; I never neglected a duty but I can recount it with revenge and indignation. I do not in any man see the image of Christ, but I love him the more dearly for it, and abhor myself for being so much unlike it. I know, Satan, I shall speed never the worse with God, because I have thee for mine enemy. I know I shall speed much the better, because I have myself for mine enemy. Certainly he that can take Christ offered, that can in all points admit him, as well to purify as to justify, as well to rule as save, as well his grace as his mercy, need not fear all the powers of darkness, nor all the armies of the foulest sins which Satan can charge his conscience withal.

BR. REYNOLDS.

Inherent Righteousness cannot justify us.

IF indeed we have our *fruit in holiness*, notwithstanding we must note, that the more we abound therein, the more need we have to crave that we may be strengthened and supported: our very virtues may be snares unto us. The enemy, that waiteth for all occasions to work our ruin, hath found it harder to overthrow an humble sinner, than a proud saint. There is no man's case so dangerous, as his whom Satan hath persuaded that his own righteousness shall present him pure and blameless in the sight of God. If we could say we were not guilty of any thing at all in our consciences, (we know ourselves far from this innocency; we cannot say, we know nothing by ourselves; but if we could) should we therefore plead not guilty before the presence of our Judge, that sees further into our hearts than we

ourselves can do? If our hands did never offer violence to our brethren, a bloody thought doth prove us murderers before him: if we had never opened our mouth to utter any scandalous, offensive, or hurtful word, the cry of our secret cogitations is heard in the ears of God. If we did not commit the sins, which daily and hourly, either in deed, word, or thoughts we do commit; yet in the good things which we do, how many defects are there intermingled! God, in that which is done, respecteth the mind and intention of the doer. Cut off then all those things wherein we have regarded our own glory, those things which men do to please men, and to satisfy our own liking, those things which we do for any by-respect, not sincerely and purely for the love of God—and a small score will serve for the number of our righteous deeds. Let the holiest and best things which we do be considered: we are never better affected unto God than when we pray; yet when we pray, how are our affections many times distracted! How little reverence do we shew unto the grand Majesty of God, unto whom we speak! How little remorse of our own miseries! How little taste of the sweet influence of his tender mercies do we feel! Are we not as unwilling many times to begin, and as glad to make an end, as if, in saying *Call upon me*, he had set us a very burdensome task? It may seem somewhat extreme, which I will speak; therefore let every one judge of it, even as his own heart shall tell him, and no otherwise; I will but only make a demand: If God should yield unto us, not as unto Abraham, if fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, yea, or if ten good persons could be found in a city, for their sakes the city should not be destroyed: but, and if he should make us an offer thus large; search all the generations of men since the fall of our father Adam, find one man, that hath done one action, which hath passed from him pure, without any stain or blemish at all; and for that one man's only action, neither man nor angel shall feel the torments which are prepared for both. Do you think that this ransom, to deliver men and angels, could be found to be among the sons of men? The best things which we do, have somewhat in them to be pardoned. How then can we do any thing meritorious, or worthy to be rewarded? Indeed, God doth liberally

promise whatsoever appertaineth to a blessed life, to as many as sincerely keep his law, though they be not exactly able to keep it. Wherefore we acknowledge a dutiful necessity of doing well; but the meritorious dignity of doing well, we utterly renounce. We see how far we are from the perfect righteousness of the law; the little fruit which we have in holiness, it is, God knoweth, corrupt and unsound: we put no confidence at all in it, we challenge nothing in the world for it, we dare not call God to reckoning, as if we had him in our debt-books: our continual suit to him is, and must be, to bear with our infirmities, and pardon our offences.

HOOVER.

Faith Justifies Instrumentally.

1. FAITH doth not justify us, as it is in itself a work or act exerted by us.

It is true, the Apostle tells us, that Abraham's faith *was imputed to him for righteousness*, Rom. iv. 22: but this cannot be understood literally and properly, as if the very act of believing were his righteousness; for then it would contradict many other places of Scripture, asserting that Christ Jesus is our righteousness. It must therefore be taken tropically, as relating to Christ: that is, faith is our righteousness no otherwise, than as it makes over the righteousness of Christ unto us; and not as it is in itself a work or grace. For, did it justify us as a work, then the Apostle had very incongruously opposed him that worketh, to him that believeth, *To him that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness*, Rom. iv. 5: for were faith our righteousness as a work, then he, that believeth, would be he, that worketh; and his work would be accounted to him for righteousness. Neither, indeed, is it any whit less absurd, to think that our faith, which is an imperfect grace, can yet be a perfect and complete righteousness: for faith itself hath its manifold failings, and is, as one saith well, like the hand which Moses stretched out in working of miracles; for, as that hand was smitten with leprosy, to shew that it was no efficacy in the hand itself that wrought those wonders, so even the faith that justifies hath a leprosy, an uncleanness cleaving to it, to shew that it justifies not by its own virtue, not as it is a work and act of ours, for so itself needeth justification.

2. Neither doth faith justify, as it is the fulfilling of the condition of the covenant of grace: *He that believeth shall be saved*.

For, as I have observed before, faith is not properly and immediately the condition of this covenant, but remotely and secondarily. For we must resolve this covenant thus: He, that can produce a perfect righteousness, shall be saved; but he, that believes, shall have the perfect righteousness of Christ made his: so, from the first to the last, *He that believeth shall be saved*. Where it is to be noted, that faith is not made the immediate condition of salvation; but only it is the immediate condition of obtaining an interest in a perfect righteousness, by which we are justified and saved.

3. Faith justifying neither as a work nor as a condition, and therefore not as being itself our righteousness, it remains that it must needs justify, as it gives us a right and title to the righteousness of another, even of Jesus Christ. So that we are not so properly justified by faith, as by the righteousness which faith apprehends and applies: for the righteousness of Christ being made ours, God is engaged in justice to justify us, because then we are righteous persons. This virtue, that faith hath to justify, is not its own; neither proceeds from itself, but from the object, which it apprehends and makes ours, viz. the righteousness of Christ by which we are justified, directly and immediately; but by faith, only correlatively and metonymically, as it relates unto the righteousness of Christ. When the woman was healed only by touching of Christ's garments, the virtue that healed her proceeded not from her touch, but from him whom she touched: yet our Saviour tells her, that her faith had made her whole, Matt. ix. 22; which can no more be properly understood of her faith, than of her touch; for still the healing virtue was from Christ, conveyed to her by her faith, and that faith testified by her touch: so, when we say that we are justified by faith, we must understand that faith doth it not through its own virtue, but by virtue of Christ's righteousness, which is conveyed to us by our faith. This righteousness of Christ, as I observed before, is both a righteousness of satisfaction and of obedience; for we need both unto our justification; and these must be made ours, or else we can never be justified by them:

ours, they cannot be naturally, as wrought out by ourselves; consequently, they must be ours legally, and by imputation; the law looking upon what our Surety hath done, as though he had done it, and accordingly dealing with us. Now if we can but apprehend how faith makes the righteousness of Christ to be ours, it will be very easy and obvious to apprehend the way and manner how we are justified.

4. To clear up this, therefore, faith makes the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction and obedience to be ours, as it is the bond of that mystical union, that there is between Christ and the believing soul. If Christ and the believer be one, the righteousness of Christ may well be reckoned as the righteousness of the believer. Nay, mutual imputation flows from mystical union: the sins of believers are imputed to Christ, and the righteousness of Christ to them; and both justly, because being united each to other by mutual consent, (which consent on our part is faith,) God considers them but as one person. As it is in marriage, the husband stands liable to the wife's debts, and the wife stands interested in the husband's possessions; so it is here: faith is the marriage-band and tie between Christ and a believer; and, therefore, all the debts of a believer are chargeable upon Christ, and the righteousness of Christ is instated upon the believer: so that, upon the account of this marriage-union, he hath a legal right and title to the purchase made by it. Indeed this union is a high and inscrutable mystery; yet plain it is, that there is such close, spiritual, and real union between Christ and a believer: the Scripture often both expressly affirms it, *He, that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17; and also lively illustrates it by several resemblances. It is likewise plain, that the band of this union, on the believer's part, is faith: consult Rom. xi. 17, compared with the 20th verse. And, therefore, from the nearness of this union, there follows a communication of interests and concerns: insomuch, that the Church is called Christ, *So also is Christ*, 1 Cor. xii. 12; and their sufferings called the sufferings of Christ, Col. i. 24. Acts ix. 4. So, likewise, from this mystical union, the sins of believers are laid upon Christ, and his righteousness imputed unto them: see this as to both parts, *He hath made*

him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21; and Gal. iii. 13, 14: *He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; that the blessing of Abraham might come on us*. It is still upon the account of this union, that Christ was reckoned a sinner, and we are reckoned as righteous. And, therefore, as faith is the bond and tie of this union, so it is, without more difficulty, the way and means of our justification: by faith, we are united unto Christ; by that union, we have truly a righteousness; and, upon that righteousness, the justice of God, as well as his mercy, is engaged to justify and acquit us.

And thus you see this great truth explained, of justification by faith; which hath, indeed, been as great a torment and vexation to men's understandings to conceive how it should be, as it hath been peace and quiet to their consciences in the certainty it was so. B^P. HOPKINS.

But we are farther to inquire, how faith justifies. Not certainly in that sense, as if God graciously accepts the act of faith, and new Gospel obedience flowing therefrom in the room of the perfect obedience, which, from the rigour of the law, we are bound to perform in order to justification: as the Socinians, and Curcellæus, who imitates them in this respect, explain it; understanding by faith the observance of the precepts of the Gospel, which God has prescribed by Christ. For this is to make void the whole Gospel. The Gospel has not substituted our faith, but Christ's obedience, by which the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, in the room of that perfect obedience, which the law required in order to justification. It is also false, that faith and new obedience are one and the same thing. I own that faith is a virtue or grace, commanded by the law of God, and that a believer, by his very believing, obeys God. I likewise confess, that we are to look upon nothing as a true and living faith, which is not fruitful in good works. But yet faith is one thing, and the obedience flowing from it quite another, especially in the matter of justification, of which we now speak, where Paul always contradistinguishes the obedience of all manner of works to faith. For it is a rash attempt

to confine to a certain species or kind of works what the Apostle says concerning them all in general. The force of truth extorted from Schlichtingius this assertion: 'Faith, in its strict and proper signification, bears the same relation to obedience as the cause to the effect, as the tree to the fruit, as the mother to the daughter,' *contra Meisnerum*, p. 325. In fine, neither the truth nor the justice of God allow our faith and our obedience, which are imperfect, to be admitted as perfect. For, it is the will of God, that the righteousness of the law be fulfilled in our justification, and not that any thing be derogated from it, as we proved § XLII.

Others think proper to say, that faith is here considered as a condition which the covenant of grace requires of us, in order to our justification. A certain learned divine of ours, in a volume of disputations lately published, speaks thus: 'Nothing can be said with greater probability, simplicity, and more agreeable to Scripture, than that justification is therefore ascribed to faith, because faith is the condition which the Gospel requires of us in order to our being accounted righteous and innocent before God.' And a little after; 'yea, since we affirm that faith alone justifies, we do not intend, that the alone act of believing, taken precisely, as it is opposed to acts of love and hope, and distinguished from repentance, is the condition which the new covenant or the Gospel requires, in order to obtain remission of sin, and be absolved from them on account of Christ. For, the hope of pardon, and love to God, sorrow also for sin, and purpose of a new life; in a word, all the acts, requisite to a genuine and serious conversion, are also somewhat necessary, and altogether prerequisite, in order for any to be received into the favor of God, and from thence forward to be accounted a justified person, yea, that a living faith that works by love, which we affirm alone to justify, includes and implies all these things.' And the learned person imagines these are such truths, as the doctors both of the Romish and reformed schools receive with common consent. He also adds: 'As often as the Apostle affirms, that we are not justified by works, but by faith, he intends nothing else, but that none can, on any account, be justified by such observance of the law as the legal covenant requires, in order to obtain life

thereby, and escape the curse of God; but that God accounts as righteous, and out of mere grace, freely forgives all the sins of those, who with sincerity receive the Gospel, and from faith perform obedience thereto.' These things justly call for our animadversion.

1st. With this very learned person's leave, I doubt whether he can persuade any who is not altogether unskilled in theological matters, that what he has proposed is the received opinion of the reformed school. I find nothing of this in their confessions and catechisms; but there is a great deal which does not differ much from the words of the learned person, in the writings of those, whose heretical principles I from my very heart believe are detestable to him.

2ndly. When the discourse is about the relation which faith bears to justification, the learned person does not seem with sufficient caution to repeat so often *the act of believing*. For it is well known that the reformed churches condemned Arminius and his followers, for saying that faith comes to be considered in the matter of justification as a work or act of ours: whereas the Dutch confession speaks far more accurately; namely, that faith is here instead of an instrument, whereby we are joined together with Christ in a partnership or communion of all his benefits. I am well aware, that this is not very agreeable to the learned person, who maintains, that faith can be said to be the instrument of justification no other way but as it is a kind of condition, prerequisite on our part thereto. But when the Remonstrant apologists, in order to be relieved from that troublesome expression of our confessions, by their softening interpretations wrote, that faith is therefore said to be the instrument of justification, 'as it is a work performed by us according to the command, and by the grace of God; for, a condition, so far as it is performed, may in some measure be said to become a mean or instrument, whereby we obtain the thing promised on such a condition,' *Apolog.* p. 112: *a*; the Reformed protested, that they were displeased with this explication. They deny not, that our master, Christ himself, says, John vi. 29, that *faith is a work*: neither do they refuse that in the matter of justification, the apprehending and receiving Christ is an act of faith; and that faith ought to be so far consi-

dered as active. Yet they deny, that faith justifies as it is an act prescribed by God, (for thus it would stand in the same relation with the other works enjoined by the law,) but they affirm, that we are justified by that act, as by it we apprehend Christ, are united to him, and embrace his righteousness. Which they usually explain by this similitude: a beggar's stretching forth his hand, by which, at the command of a rich man, he receives the free gift of his charity, is the act of the beggar prescribed by the rich; but it does not enrich the beggar, as it is an act, but as by this means he applies the gift to himself, and appropriates, or makes it his own. These things are too evident to be obscured by any quibbles or subtleties whatever.

3dly. Nor do I think it an accurate way of speaking, that faith is the condition, which the Gospel requireth of us in order to be accounted righteous and without guilt before God. The condition of justification, properly speaking, is perfect obedience only: this the law requires; nor does the Gospel substitute any other: but declares that satisfaction has been made to the law by Christ our Surety; moreover, that it is the office of faith to accept that satisfaction offered to it, and by accepting appropriate the same. Which is quite a different thing from saying (as the Socinians and Remonstrants do, and which I know not whether the learned person would choose to say,) that in the room of perfect obedience, which the law prescribed as the condition of justification, the Gospel now requireth faith, as the condition of the same justification. Though some of the Reformed have said, that faith is a *condition, sine qua non, without which we cannot* be justified; yet they were far from being of opinion, that faith is a condition properly so called, on performing which, man should, according to the gracious covenant of God, have a right to justification as to a reward. This is very far from the mind of the truly reformed. See what the celebrated Triglandius has fully, solidly, and perspicuously reasoned against the subtle trifling of the Remonstrants in *Examine Apologiæ*, c. 20, 21. and Isaac Junius in *Antapologia*, p. 236.

4thly. Neither is it according to the mind of the reformed church, that the acts of hope and love, nay, all those which are required to a true and serious conversion,

are included in justifying faith as justifying, and concur with faith, strictly so called, to justification. When the Remonstrants said in their confession, that 'faith contains in its compass the whole of a man's conversion prescribed by the Gospel: nay, the prescript of faith can here be considered in no other light, than as, by its natural propriety, it includes the obedience of faith, and is as a fruitful parent of good works, and the fountain and source of all Christian piety and holiness,' c. x. § 2, 3. The Leyden professors in their censure remarked, that 'the adversaries, who write in this manner, and throw off the mask, ascribe to faith the *Socinian-Popish* faith of justification, which Peter Bertius, a principal assertor of this, found to be the way to popery.' And this assertion of theirs they make out by solid arguments. And when the Remonstrant apologist foolishly said, that this his opinion differed not from the common doctrine of the reformed churches, the venerable Triglandius replied, that 'it was clearer than noon-day, that this was too barefaced an assertion.' The whole comes to this, that no faith justifies, but that which is living and fruitful in good works; that acts of love and holiness are required, as fruits of faith, as testimonies of Christ dwelling in us, as marks of our regeneration, as what go before salvation, and without which there can be no full assurance of it. But that those acts of love, holiness, and conversion, concur with faith to justification, and are included in justifying faith, as such, is a strange way of speaking to reformed ears, nor agreeable to Scripture, which always, in the matter of justification, sets faith in opposition to all works whatever.

5thly. Some time ago *I read* in Socinus, before the sentiments of this celebrated person came to hand, the same exception which he makes, that, by the works which Paul excludes from justification, is understood the perfect observance of the law, such as the legal covenant requires. For thus he says *de servat. P. 4. c. 11.* 'the works to which faith is opposed are not every kind of works, nor taken and considered in every light, but, as we have observed elsewhere, these works denote an absolute and perpetual observance and performance of the divine law, through the whole course of life.' But our divines openly declared against this exposition; who contend that

all works, however considered, are opposed to faith. The Apostle's words are plain, *he that worketh not, but believeth*; and his mind or intention, as Lubbertus has learnedly observed, is to be considered from the state of the controversy, then in debate. But the state of the controversy was not, whether a man could be justified by a perfect observance of the law, if there was any one who could keep it perfectly?—which none in his senses will deny: or whether there are any, who, since Adam's first sin, have, for the whole of their life, done nothing amiss, but have attained to every perfection both of parts, degrees, and perseverance?—which none in his right mind will affirm. But the matter in question was, whether the Jews could be justified by that observance of the law which they were able to perform. They certainly thought that they could be justified if they only observed the moral law to the utmost of their power, and gave these satisfactions for their failings which the ceremonial law had prescribed. But the Apostle denies this, resting his argument on that maxim, that the righteousness which can be valid at God's tribunal, must be perfect in all its parts: but since none can pretend to any such works, he concludes, that no works, of what kind soever, can contribute any thing to obtain justification. The Apostle, doubtless, excludes those works in which they commonly trusted, who endeavoured to *establish their own righteousness*. But it is not credible, that any of them could say, that he kept himself pure, through the whole course of his life from every even the least stain of sin. These things are evident. . . .

The genuine opinion of the Reformed is this: that faith justifies, as it is the bond of our strictest union with Christ, by which all things that are Christ's become also ours, as we explained § XXXI. Or, which is the same thing, as it is the acceptance of the gift offered, rendering the donation firm and irrevocable. And this is what the Apostle intended when he wrote, Rom. iv. 5, that *faith is counted for righteousness*; that is, faith is judged to be that with which the right of demanding the reward is connected; a way of speaking borrowed from merchants: thus in the book of God's accounts is set down what he hath given to us, and what we are indebted to him. But when in the other

page, our complete obedience, and the payment of the debt could not be inserted, what then is written there, viz. to balance the account? In the first place, our righteousness, or the righteousness of Christ wrought out for us: then * our faith, by which we receive that righteousness offered to us, and present it to God as ours.

WITSIUS.

Faith continues our Justification as well as Justifies.

AND as it is on all sides confessed that, at first, faith only justifies; so it continues our justification. *By faith we stand*, or continue justified, says the Apostle, Rom. xi. 20: and elsewhere, *We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*, 1 Pet. i. 5. *It is the shield by which we quench all the fiery darts of the devil, and overcome the world*, Eph. vi. 16: *nor is it only victorious, but (ἡ νίκη) victory itself*, 1 John v. 4, 5. Now, that which makes us stand in a justified estate, that by which we are kept unto salvation, and by which we are victorious and conquerors over the world, and sin, and Satan—that, I say, continues our righteousness; for if that be not continued, it is impossible we should stand, be kept unto salvation, or conquer: but this faith only does, and not works; *ergo*, it is faith which continues our justification. Again, *By faith we are regenerate and become the sons of God*, John i. 12. Gal. iii. 26; *it is our spiritual life*, Gal. ii. 20. Heb. x. 38; *and that life is eternal*, John xvii. 3; *so that we cannot perish*, John iii. 16. xi. 26. Whence we may evidently conclude, That which continues us in an estate in which we cannot perish, continues our justification; for if that be not continued, we certainly perish; but it is faith which so continues us: *ergo*, and further, As it is certain and confessed, that the merits and satisfaction of our blessed Saviour, apprehended and applied by a lively faith, is that only which at first does or can justify us, *coram Deo*, from all sins past; so it is as certain, that such satisfaction, so applied, will justify us from all succeeding and future sins, as they come. For if such satisfaction, so applied,

* The author does not here mean, that faith, as an act of ours, justifies: for he has sufficiently explained himself on that head: he only mentions faith here as the instrument by which we lay hold on Christ's righteousness, whereby our debt, both of duty and punishment, is fully paid.

was sufficient to cure all the wounds of our soul, and take away all our past sins, and that at once and altogether, without the concurrence of works; then certainly the same satisfaction, applied by the same faith, will be sufficient, and the only means to take away single sins, as, *pro futuro*, they come to be committed. And then we shall not only at first owe our justification, but the continuation of it also, to faith apprehending and applying our blessed Saviour's merits and justification. And this may further appear by the collation and analogy between the brazen serpent erected by Moses in the wilderness, Numb. xxi. 9. &c.; and our blessed Saviour crucified, the type and the antitype, thus set down by St. John, as explained by our blessed Saviour: *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life*, John iii. 14, 15. Where I observe, (1.) That, as they whose bodies were bit by the fiery serpents, were cured of their bodily diseases, to a temporal life, by looking on that serpent with their corporeal eyes; so they whose souls are bit by the old serpent, the devil, are cured of their spiritual wounds, to eternal life, by looking on our blessed Saviour crucified, with the spiritual eye of faith, or, as the text explains it, by believing on him. (2.) And as their looking on the brazen serpent, if they were bit twenty times, cured them, nor was there any other way appointed by God to do it, so as by that means not only the first, but the second, third, and twentieth biting was perfectly cured; so, by looking on our blessed Saviour crucified, with the eye of faith, not only the first biting, or sin of our souls, but all our sins successively, be they ever so many, may be cured, that is, pardoned, by that means; nor is there any other name or means under heaven given, by which we can be cured, or saved from our sins, and so justified. He is the only propitiation for our sins, nor can that propitiation be made ours, so as to have the benefit of it, by any other means, than by apprehending and applying it, by a lively and fruitful faith. And further, this is the express doctrine of our church in her homily; where, speaking of the passion and satisfaction of our blessed Saviour, applied by faith, it follows—In this standeth the continual pardon of our daily offences; in this resteth our justification; in this we be

allowed, &c. The continual pardon of our daily offences, and therefore our justification, standing, resting, or depending, upon the merits and satisfaction of our blessed Saviour, applied and made ours by faith, the only means of such application, it evidently follows, that faith is not only the means of our justification, at first, which you grant, but also of our continuation in it.—Seeing the same faith, which procured pardon at first, procures also continual pardon of all offences which follow.

BP. BARLOW.

By the Righteousness of Faith St. Paul means Christ's Righteousness imputed by Faith.

THAT I may give you further information and satisfaction, in this article of Justification by Faith, it is to be considered, that faith, hope, love, fear, &c. are, in Scripture, as in other good authors, usually put for their objects. So God is called *our hope*, Jer. xvii. 7, 13, 14, 17; and Christ *our hope*, 1 Tim. i. 7. *God is love*, 1 John iv. 8. The fear of Isaac; that is, the object of hope, love, and fear. *If I have made gold my hope*, Job xxxi. 24; that is, the object of my hope. So that famous saying of Ignatius, mentioned by Eusebius, *ὁ ἐπὶ ἐπὶ ἐσταύρωται*; my love, that is, Christ, whom I love, is crucified. So St. Paul is said to *preach the faith*, Gal. i. 23; that is, Christ, and the Gospel, the objects of faith. And hence is that common distinction amongst the schoolmen and divines, *Fides quæ creditur, et fides quam credimus*, or the object of our faith. So that when St. Paul speaks of our justification *coram Deo*, and says, that *faith is accounted for righteousness*, Rom. iv. 5; and that *righteousness imputed by God*, Rom. iv. 6; by faith here, its object Christ Jesus, his sufferings and satisfaction, is and must be meant. For *He is our righteousness, which God imputes and makes ours*, 1 Cor. i. 30. For *we are justified* (*coram Deo*) *only through the redemption which is ἐν Χριστῷ*, in or by Jesus Christ, or by his blood, Rom. iii. 24. So the Apostle says, that *we are justified by his blood*, Rom. v. 9. So that it is our blessed Saviour's blood, and the redemption and pardon of our sins purchased by it, which justifies us *coram Deo*. But this blood and redemption of our blessed Saviour must be applied and made ours by faith only; and *ergo*, the same

Apostle says expressly, that *we are justified through faith in his blood*, Rom. iii. 25; *Christus remissionem peccati et justificationem morte impetrat, fides sola applicat*. Now, although man, by the hand of faith, receive Christ and his righteousness, yet he can be no more said to justify himself *coram Deo*, than a beggar can be said to enrich himself, who receives a thousand pounds freely given him by his benefactor. For as it is not the beggar's hand, which receives, but the money received, which is riches; so it is not the hand of faith which receives Christ's righteousness, but the righteousness received, which justifies us *coram Deo*: and this the rather, because the beggar had, by nature, a hand to receive his benefactor's benevolence; but our most gracious God gives both *his Son*, John iii. 26, who is *our Righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30; and he gives us *faith* too, Eph. ii. 8, which is the hand to receive it.

BP. BARLOW.

Distinction but inseparable Union between Justification and Sanctification.

Now follows the benefit, ease and rest to thy soul; *I will ease you, or give you rest*; that is, I will free you of your burden, I will ease you of your sin, I will acquit you. And this is that we call justification of a sinner, which is an absolution or remission of sins by the only merits and satisfaction of Christ accepted for us and imputed to us: an acquitting and cancelling of all bonds and obligations of transgression for Christ's sake, through the only merit of his death, passion, and shedding of his blood. For he that hath right to Christ, hath right in Christ to be partaker of his righteousness, and of whatsoever satisfaction he hath undergone for the sins of mankind; whereby he is justified, that is, acquit before God of the guilt of sin, and of the punishment according to the law due for the same. For *God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. *For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, many are made righteous*, Rom. v. 19.

This is the ease, this is the rest here mentioned, the unlading and unburdening of a sinner, where Christ dischargeth him of his loading, and beareth it upon his own back. For *he hath borne our griefs, and*

carried our sorrows: He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed—*The Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all*, Isaiah liii. 4, 5, 6. Thus he eased Peter, when his heart was ready to break for denying him: thus he eased Mary Magdalen, a woman laden with sins, when she *bathed his feet with tears*, Luke vii. 48. Thus he refreshed trembling Saul, the persecutor, Acts ix. 6. And still he casteth the eyes of his mercy upon every one that is *poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his word*, Isaiah lxvi. 2.

See therefore here to whom alone a troubled soul is to have recourse for ease. Neither to angels nor archangels: for those who do so, *hold not the Head*, Col. ii. 19. Neither to saints nor martyrs, to Peter nor Paul, no not to the blessed virgin herself: for *Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel knows us not*, Isaiah lxiii. 16; and, *Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord*, Jer. xvii. 5. Nor to the law given by Moses: *for the Law worketh (not ease, but) wrath*, Rom. iv. 15. Nor will our merits and good works, pilgrimages, fastings or alms-deeds, purchase this ease: for although we could do all we ought to do, yet must we say *we are unprofitable servants, and that we have done but that which was our duty to do*, Luke xvii. 10. It is Christ Jesus, and only Christ Jesus, who can give rest to a troubled soul, that *Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world*, John i. 29. . . .

Those who thus come unto Christ, must also take his yoke upon them. But what is *this yoke*? even the *yoke of obedience*; which should have been ours, but Christ for our sakes took it upon him, and made it his. Yet not that we should draw our necks out of the collar, but still do our endeavours by *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope to come*, Tit. ii. 12. 13. As therefore in *coming unto Christ* you had faith in the ease by him, acquitting or justification; so in the *taking his yoke* ye have sanctification or holiness of life. All which are so linked together, that neither must they nor can they be put asunder. No man comes to Christ by faith, but shall be eased; but no man can

ever truly and seriously come unto him to be eased by him, but he must take his yoke upon him: no man puts on Christ to be justified, but he takes on his yoke also to be sanctified. *That which God hath joined together, let no man put asunder*, Matt. xix. 6.

True it is, and nothing more true, that no works of ours in this life can abide the touch-stone of God's law, and therefore not able to justify us in the presence of God, but to condemn us. But it is true also, that we are therefore justified through faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ, that in him we might do works pleasing and acceptable to Almighty God, which out of him we could not do. For as the blood and sufferings of Jesus Christ, imputed to us through faith, cleanseth and acquitteth us of all the sins whereof we stood guilty before we believed; so the imputation of his righteousness when we believe, makes our works (though of themselves far short of what they should be, yet) to be acceptable and just in the eyes of the Almighty; Christ supplying out of his riches our poverty, and by communication of his obedience continually perfecting ours where we fail; that so we might receive the reward of the righteous of him that shall reward every man according to his works. Being therefore in Christ, we are so much the more bound to frame our lives in holy obedience unto God's commandments; in that before we were justified we could not, but now henceforth we are enabled to do that which for Christ's sake will be acceptable and pleasing to Almighty God our Father.

JOS. MEDE.

I shall add but two words of advice on this head, of the difference between justification and sanctification. Do not divide them. Do not confound them.

1st. Do not divide and separate them: no man can do so, but in dream and notion. Justification and sanctification God hath joined together, and no man can put them asunder. They are everlastingly united together, and every one that is a partaker of either is a partaker of both. 2dly, Do not confound them. I am persuaded that one of the main causes of the disorder that is in the spirits and the conversation of the most part of Christians, lies in their confounding these two great blessings. They do not give them their

proper place; they are not rightly exercised about them in their due sphere; therefore I shall offer a word or two of advice for preventing this confounding of them. When you are seeking justification, let there be no mind of sanctification, I mean as to any merit: but when you are seeking sanctification, have a good mind to justification. To make this matter plain to you; when you are seeking justification, you should have no thought of sanctification; the reason is, because justification is an act of pure grace, that we must betake ourselves to God for, as poor condemned sinners. If men will perplex us with qualifications, pray let it run this way, What is it that qualifies a sinner for justification? it is this only, that he must be a condemned sinner; God's law must condemn him, and the man must come into God's court with this sentence in his hand, 'Lord, justify a poor sinner for Christ's sake; the law hath condemned me, and sentenced me to hell, and thither I must go except Gospel grace relieves me in Christ Jesus.' When I say that in seeking justification you should have no mind of sanctification, my meaning is only this, that when you come to plead at God's bar for justification, do not dream of bringing your sanctification with you: for it is altogether improper and impertinent at this court. Let men varnish their doctrines which way they will, and cover them with what pretences they please, they do but murder souls, who pretend to advise them to bring something with them to God for the grace of justification. Bring thy sins with thee, and bring the curse of the law upon thy conscience, and lay these before the Lord, saying, 'Lord, here is an undone sinner, have mercy upon me, for Christ's sake:' there should be nothing else heard there but that. But when you come for sanctification, you have good reason to mind justification, for it flows from it. When you would try your justification, in God's name try it by your sanctification, that is allowed you; the reason is, it is but a trying the tree by its fruit. If the question be, Am I a pardoned, forgiven, accepted sinner in the sight of God, through the righteousness of Christ? if that be the question, try it by your sanctification; for all who are justified by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, are also sanctified by the Spirit of God. Now sanctification being the work

of God in us, is far more easily discernible than justification, which is an act of God about us. Justification is the sentence of a judge, but sanctification, as you have heard, is a gracious work of God on the heart and soul of a poor sinner, and that may be more easily known: therefore try your justification by your sanctification. In short, they who bring sanctification as a title to their justification, they err the breadth of God's whole heavens: and they who pretend to the blessing of justification, and cannot justify it by the practice of sanctification, do but deceive themselves. *If any man, saith the Apostle, abideth in him, he ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked,* 1 John ii. 6. I would only add, it is the Spirit of God alone that can make the word of God, and the truths of it, powerful upon us; it is he alone that can let us into them, and make us know spiritually and savingly the great blessings of justification and sanctification; our acceptance with God through the righteousness of another, and our being adorned by the Spirit of God with a holiness of his own implanting in us. We must not make our holiness our righteousness, nor our righteousness our holiness; our righteousness belongs to another, and only the benefit of it accrues to us; our holiness is the work of the Spirit in us, and Christ is the root of both. He is the person we are justified by or through, and his Spirit is the root of all holiness in us; and both give us the possession of eternal life: justification, by the sentence of the judge, is the ground, and sanctification is that which makes us meet for it in his time and way.

REV. R. TRAILL.

The very simplicity of this Doctrine renders it hard to be received.

It is not without cause that I do so largely intreat of these things. For it seemeth to reason but a small matter, that the Holy Ghost is received by the only hearing of faith, and that there is nothing else required of us, but that we, setting apart all our works, should give ourselves only to the hearing of the Gospel. Man's heart doth not understand nor believe that so great a treasure, namely, the Holy Ghost, is given by the only hearing of faith; but reasoneth after this manner: Forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death, the giving of the Holy Ghost, of righteous-

ness, and everlasting life, are great things: therefore if thou wilt obtain these inestimable benefits, thou must perform some other great and weighty matter. This opinion the devil doth well like and approve, and also increaseth the same in the heart. Therefore when reason heareth this, Thou canst do nothing for the obtaining of the forgiveness of sins, but must only hear the word of God, by and by it crieth out; and saith, Fie! thou makest too small account of the remission of sins, &c. So the inestimable greatness of the gift is the cause that we cannot believe it; and because this incomparable treasure is freely offered, therefore it is despised.

But this we must needs learn, that forgiveness of sins, Christ and the Holy Ghost, are freely given unto us at the only hearing of faith preached, notwithstanding our horrible sins and demerits. And we must not weigh, how great the thing is that is given, and how unworthy we are of it (for so should the greatness of the gift, and our unworthiness, terrify us,) but we must think that it pleaseth God freely to give unto us this unspeakable gift; unto us, I say, which are unworthy, as Christ in Luke saith, *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's pleasure to give it unto you: lo, to give unto you,* saith he, *a kingdom,* Luke xii. 32. To whom? to you unworthy, which are his little flock. If I then be little, and the thing great (nay rather of all things the greatest) which God hath given unto me, I must think, that he also is great and only great, which giveth it. If he offer it and will give it, I consider not mine own sin and unworthiness, but his fatherly good-will towards me which is the giver; and I receive the greatness of the gift with joy and gladness, and am thankful for so inestimable a gift given freely unto me—to me, I say, unworthy, by the hearing of faith.

Here again foolish reason is offended, and reproveth us, saying, Where ye teach men to do nothing at all for the obtaining of so great and inestimable a gift, but to hear the word of God, this seemeth to tend to the great contempt of grace, and to make men secure, idle, and dissolute, so that they slack their hands, and do no good at all. Therefore it is not good to preach this doctrine, for it is not true; but men must be urged to labour and to exercise themselves unto righteousness, and then shall they obtain this gift. The self-same

thing the Pelagians in times past objected against the Christians. But hear what Paul saith in this place, *Ye have received the Holy Ghost*, not by your own labor and travail, not by the works of the law, *but by the hearing of faith*. Briefly, hear what Christ himself saith, and what he answereth to Martha, being very careful, and hardly bearing that her sister Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus, and hearing his word, should leave her to minister alone. *Martha, Martha*, saith he, *thou carest and art troubled about many things, but one thing is needful: Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her*, Luke x. 41, 42. A man, therefore, is made a Christian not by working but by hearing; wherefore, he that will exercise himself to righteousness must first exercise himself in hearing the Gospel. Now, when he hath heard and received the Gospel, let him give thanks to God with a joyful and a glad heart, and afterwards let him exercise himself in those good works which are commanded in the law, so that the law and works may follow the hearing of faith. So may he quietly walk in the light, which is Christ, and boldly choose and do works, not hypocritical, but good works indeed, such as he knoweth to please God and to be commanded of him, and condemn all those hypocritical shadows of free-will works.

Our adversaries think that faith, whereby we receive the Holy Ghost, is but a light matter; but how high and hard a matter it is, I myself do find by experience, and so do all they which, with me, do earnestly embrace the same. It is soon said, that by the only hearing of faith, the Holy Ghost is received; but it is not so easily heard, laid hold on, believed, and retained, as it is said. Wherefore, if thou hear of me that Christ is that Lamb of God, sacrificed for thy sins, see also that thou hear it effectually. Paul very aptly calleth it the *hearing of faith*, and not the word of faith, although there be small difference; that is, such a word as thou hearing dost believe, so that the word be not only my voice, but may be heard of thee, and may enter into thy heart, and may be believed of thee; then it is truly and indeed the hearing of faith through the which thou receivest the Holy Ghost, which after thou hast once received, thou shalt also mortify thy flesh.

The faithful do find by their own experience, how gladly they would hold and

embrace the word when they hear it, with a full faith, and abandon this opinion of the law and of their own righteousness, but they feel in their flesh a mighty resistance against the spirit; for reason and the flesh will needs work together. This saying, *Ye must be circumcised and keep the law*, cannot be utterly rooted out in our minds, but it sticketh fast in the hearts of all the faithful. There is in the faithful therefore a continual conflict between the hearing of faith and the works of the law. For the conscience always murmureth, and thinketh that this is too easy a way, that by the only hearing of the word, righteousness, the Holy Ghost, and life everlasting, are promised unto us. But come once to an earnest trial thereof, and then tell me how easy a thing it is to hear the word of faith. Indeed, He which giveth is great; moreover, he giveth great things willingly and freely, and upbraideth no man therewith; but thy capacity is hard, and faith weak, still striving against thee, so that thou art not able to receive this gift. But let thy conscience murmur against thee never so much, and let this *must* come never so often into thy mind, yet stand fast and hold out, until thou overcome this *must*. So, as faith increaseth by little and little, that opinion of the righteousness of the law will diminish. But this cannot be done without great conflicts.

LUTHER.

There may be Justification, where there is not the certainty of it.

It seems then that justifying faith consists in these two things; viz. in having a mind to know Christ, and a will to rest upon him.

Yes; whosoever sees so much excellency in Christ that thereby he is drawn to embrace him as the holy rock of salvation, that man truly believes to justification.

But is it not necessary to justification to be assured that my sins are pardoned, and that I am justified?

No, that is no act of faith as it justifieth, but an effect and fruit that followeth after justification: for no man is justified by believing that he is justified, for he must be justified before he can believe it: and no man is pardoned by believing that he is pardoned, for he must be pardoned before he can believe it. But faith as it justifieth is a resting upon Christ to obtain pardon, the acknowledging him to be

the only Saviour, and the hanging upon him for salvation, Matt. xvi. 16. John xx. 31. Acts viii. 37. Rom. x. 9. 1 John iv. 15, and v. 5.

It is the direct act of faith that justifieth, that whereby I do believe; it is the reflect act of faith that assures, that whereby I know I do believe, and it comes by way of argumentation thus :

Maj. Whosoever relieth upon Christ the Saviour of the world for justification and pardon, the word of God saith, that he by so doing is actually justified and pardoned.

Min. But I do truly rely upon Christ for justification and pardon.

Concl. Therefore I undoubtedly believe that I am justified and pardoned.

But many times both the former propositions may be granted to be true, and yet a weak Christian want strength to draw the conclusion; for it is one thing to believe, and another thing to believe that I do believe: it is one thing for a man to have his salvation certain, another thing to be certain that it is certain.

How then doth the soul reach after Christ in the act of justifying?

Even as a man fallen into a river and like to be drowned, as he is carried down with the flood espies the bough of a tree hanging over the river, which he catcheth at and clings unto with all his might to save him, and seeing no other way of succour but that, ventures his life upon it: this man so soon as he has fastened upon this bough is in a safe condition, though all troubles, fears and terrors are not presently out of his mind, until he comes to himself, and sees himself quite out of danger, then he is sure he is safe, but he was safe before he was sure. Even so it is with a believer; faith is but the espying of Christ as the only means to save, and the reaching out of the heart to lay hold upon him. God hath spoke the word and made the promise in his Son; I believe him to be the only Saviour, and remit my soul to him to be saved by his mediation. So soon as the soul can do this, God imputeth the righteousness of his Son unto it, and it is actually justified in the court of heaven, though it is not presently quieted and pacified in the court of conscience: that is done afterwards, in some sooner, in some later, by the fruits and effects of justification.

ABP. USHER.

Faith not our Righteousness, but makes Righteousness ours.

You shall understand, that in our justification by Christ it is not all one thing, the office of God unto man, and the office of man unto God. Justification is not the office of man, but of God; for man cannot make himself righteous by his own works, neither in part nor in the whole: for that were the greatest arrogancy and presumption of man that Antichrist could set up against God, to affirm that a man might by his own works take away and purge his own sins, and so justify himself. But justification is the office of God only; and is not a thing which we render unto him; but which we receive of him: not which we give to him; but which we take of him by his free mercy, and by the only merits of his most dearly beloved Son, our only Redeemer, Saviour, and Justifier, Jesus Christ.

So that the true understanding of this doctrine—We be justified freely by faith without works, or that we be justified by faith in Christ only—is not, that this our own act to believe in Christ, or this our faith in Christ, which is within us, doth justify us, and deserve our justification unto us; for that were to count ourselves to be justified by some act or virtue that is within ourselves; but the true understanding and meaning thereof is, that although we hear God's word, and believe it; although we have faith, hope, charity, repentance, dread, and fear of God within us; and do never so many good works thereunto: yet we must renounce the merit of all our said virtues, of faith, hope, and charity, and all our other virtues and good deeds, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as things that be far too weak and insufficient, and imperfect, to deserve remission of our sins, and our justification: and therefore we must trust only in God's mercy, and that sacrifice which our High Priest and Saviour Christ Jesus, the Son of God, once offered for us upon the cross, to obtain thereby God's grace and remission, as well of our original sin in baptism, as of all actual sin committed by us after our baptism; if we truly repent, and turn unfeignedly to him again.

So that, as St. John Baptist, although he were never so virtuous and godly a man, yet in this matter of forgiving of

sin, he did put the people from him, and appointed them unto Christ, saying thus unto them, *Behold, yonder is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world*, John i. 29: even so, as great and as godly a virtue as the lively faith is, yet it putteth us from itself; and remitteth or appointeth us unto Christ, for to have only by him remission of our sins, or justification. So that our faith in Christ, as it were, saith unto us thus; It is not I that take away your sins, but it is Christ only; and to him only I send you for that purpose, forsaking therein all your good virtues, words, thoughts, and works, and only putting your trust in Christ.

HOMILY ON SALVATION.

St. Paul's citation of Abraham's faith Vindicated.

BUT some here will object, (as the Jews do, and certain cavilling spirits at this day,) saying, that this word *faith* in the Hebrew signified truth, and therefore we do not rightly apply it; and moreover, that this place, out of Gen. xv. 5, speaketh of a corporal thing, namely, of the promise of posterity, and therefore is not well applied of Paul to faith in Christ, but ought simply to be understood of the faith of Abraham, whereby *he believed according to the promise of God, that he should have seed*: and hereby they would prove that the arguments and allegations of Paul do conclude nothing. In like manner they may cavil also, that the place which Paul a little after allegeth out of Heb. ii. 4, speaketh of faith as touching the full accomplishing of the whole vision, and not of faith only in Christ, for the which Paul allegeth it. Likewise they may wrest all the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, which speaketh of faith and the examples of faith. By these things such vainglorious and arrogant spirits do hunt for praise, and seek to be counted wise and learned, where they least of all deserve it. But because of the simple and ignorant, we will briefly answer to their cavillations.

To the first I answer thus, that faith is nothing else, but the truth of the heart; that is to say, a true and a right opinion of the heart as touching God. Now, faith only thinketh and judgeth rightly of God, and not reason. And then doth a man think rightly of God, when he believeth his word. But when he will measure God without the word, and believe him accord-

ing to the wisdom of reason, he hath no right opinion of God in his heart, and therefore he cannot think or judge of him as he should do. As for example, when a monk imagineth that his cowl, his shaven crown, and his vows, do please God, and that grace and everlasting life is given unto him for the same, he hath no true opinion of God, but false, and full of impiety. Truth therefore is faith itself, which judgeth rightly of God, namely, that God regardeth not our works and righteousness, because we are *unclean*; but that he will have mercy upon us, look upon us, accept us, justify us, and save us, if we *believe in his Son, whom he hath sent to be a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 2. This is a true opinion of God, and in very deed nothing else but faith itself. I cannot comprehend, nor be fully assured by reason, that I am received into God's favor for Christ's sake; but I hear this to be pronounced by the Gospel, and *I lay hold upon it by faith*.

To the second cavillation I answer, that Paul doth rightly allege the place out of the fifteenth of Genesis, applying it to faith in Christ. For with faith always must be joined a certain assurance of God's mercy. Now this assurance comprehendeth a faithful trust of remission of sins for Christ's sake. For it was impossible that thy conscience should look for any thing at God's hand, except first it be assured that God is merciful unto thee for Christ's sake. Therefore all the promises are to be referred to that first promise concerning Christ, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*, Gen. iii. 15. So did all the prophets both understand it and teach it. By this we may see that the faith of our fathers in the Old Testament, and ours now in the New, is all one, although they differ as touching their outward objects. Which thing Peter witnesseth in the Acts, when he saith, *which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear: but we believe through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be saved, even as they did*, Acts xv. 10, 11. And Paul saith, *Our fathers did all drink of that spiritual Rock that followed them, which Rock was Christ*, 1 Cor. x. 4. And Christ himself saith, *Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad*, John viii. 56. Notwithstanding, the faith of the fathers was grounded on Christ which was to come, as ours is on Christ which is now

come. Abraham in his time was justified by faith in Christ to come; but if he lived at this day, he would be justified by faith in Christ now revealed and present; like as I have said before of Cornelius, who at the first believed in Christ to come, but being instructed by Peter, he believed that Christ was already come, Acts x. 1. 3. Therefore the diversity of times never changeth faith, nor the Holy Ghost, nor the gifts thereof. For there hath been, is, and ever shall be, one mind, one judgment and understanding concerning Christ, as well in the ancient fathers, as in the faithful which are at this day, and shall come hereafter. So we have as well Christ to come, and believe in him, as the fathers in the Old Testament had. For we look for him to 'come again in the last day with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead,' whom now we believe to be come already for our salvation. Therefore this allegation of Paul offendeth none but those blind and ignorant cavillers.

Paul therefore, as I have said, rightly allegeth that place out of Genesis, of faith in Christ, when he speaketh of the faith of Abraham. For all the promises past were contained in Christ to come. Therefore, as well Abraham and the other fathers, as also we, are made righteous by faith in Christ; they by faith in him then to come, we by faith in him now present. For we intreat now of the nature and manner of justification, which is all one both in them and in us, whether it be in Christ to be revealed, or in Christ now revealed and present. It is enough, therefore, that Paul sheweth that the law justifieth not, but only faith, whether it be in Christ to come, or in Christ already come. LUTHER.

The Comfort of this Doctrine.

HOWSOEVER men when they sit at ease, do vainly tickle their hearts with the vain conceit of I know not what proportionable correspondence, between their merits and their rewards, which in the trance of their high speculations they dream that God hath measured, weighed, and laid up, as it were in bundles for them: notwithstanding we see by daily experience, in a number even of them, that when the hour of death approacheth, when they secretly hear themselves summoned forthwith to appear, and stand at the bar of that Judge, whose brightness causeth the eyes of the angels themselves to dazzle, all these idle

imaginations do then begin to hide their faces; to name merits then, is to lay their souls upon the rack, the memory of their own deeds is loathsome unto them, they forsake all things, wherein they have put any trust or confidence; no staff to lean upon, no ease, no rest, no comfort then, but only in Jesus Christ. HOOKER.

You may possibly now talk of your good works, and performing the condition of the covenant by those works, and being justified by them; but when you shall come, and appear at the dreadful tribunal of a most just God—when your conscience shall be awake, and set all your sins before you in their full number and magnitude, you will be, I doubt not, of another opinion, and say with David, who might have pleaded good works as much as you, *Ne intres, Domine, in judicium cum servo tuo*. I say, when you shall come before that great and just Judge, you will reject your own works, and inherent righteousness, and rely upon the sufferings and satisfaction of our blessed Saviour, and the justice purchased for us by it; and say, as a late learned and pious prelate did, in his last will and testament, 'I commend my soul to God, beseeching him not to look upon it as it is in itself, infinitely polluted with sin,' no mention of good works, or performance of the condition of the covenant by them; though, had there been any such thing, he might justly have pleaded and depended upon it, 'but as it is redeemed and purged with the precious blood of Christ: in confidence of whose merits alone,' not of his performance of the condition of the covenant by his own works, 'it is, that I cast myself upon his mercy for the pardon of my sins.*' So that pious and very learned and judicious person.

BP. BARLOW.

This method of becoming righteous through the obedience of Christ, is worthy of all acceptance, because it administers the *richest consolation to man*: it is an inexhaustible spring of satisfaction and repose.

Luther, that renowned reformer, and great champion for the Protestant cause, when he broke away from the mists of

* D. Sanderson, late Bishop of Lincoln. See his *Life*, by Isaac Walton, London, 1678, pp. 179, 180.

Popery, and began to understand this most noble peculiarity of Christianity, declared, that 'the gate of Paradise seemed to fly open to his view:—that he had a glimpse of its beauty, in contemplating this sacred truth; and a taste of its delights, in believing it; so sweet a composure, and such a charming tranquillity did it diffuse through his mind.' Nor do I wonder at his saying, 'For, while we are ignorant of this doctrine, there is nothing but horror and dread around us.' If we strike this text from our Bible, or this article from our creed, all is dismal and distressing. Turn which way you will, the prospect is uncomfortable. If we look to *ourselves*, we shall find misery and guilt; if to God, nothing but indignation and displeasure.—But this brightens up the whole scene. Let us observe, in the character of a feeble Christian, and of an awakened profligate, what glad tidings the Gospel is, by virtue of this doctrine; and what a miserable comforter it would be without it. The language of the *former*, in his private meditations, must proceed in some such manner as this: 'Wherewithal shall I come before the most high God? Shall I offer him my pious services? Alas! they are miserably deficient; they issue from a corrupt stock, and cannot but be corrupt shoots: I have done nothing that is worthy of his acceptance: how then shall I stand in his sacred presence? I strive to be perfect and entire, and wanting nothing; but I feel myself to be poor and indigent, and wretchedly defective. O! whither shall I go, but to him who is appointed for this very purpose? that the bones, which are broken by misery and guilt, may rejoice; that the hands which hang down, through self-condemnation and despondency, may be lifted up.—Thither then will I turn, frail and dispirited as I am, and cast all my burden upon the Lord Jesus Christ; in his unspotted righteousness, and in nothing else, can the sole of my foot find any rest. When doubts arise, and fear, like a gloomy cloud, thickens around me, this *Sun* of righteousness shall dissipate the gloom in all my pilgrimage; this shall be my constant song; in all my anxieties, this shall be my only cordial:—*Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me! O put thy trust in Jesus Christ!* His merits, and not thine own works, are the horn of thy

salvation: *whosoever believeth in him shall not be confounded.*—And as for the poor sinner brought to a sense of his enormous crimes; methinks I hear him bewailing his condition, in some such disconsolate manner: 'O wretched man that I am! how shall I attain the favor of God? My sins are multiplied above number, and aggravated beyond expression. I cannot make any satisfaction for what is past, much less can I win the Divine good-will for the future. I am polluted, root and branch: what can I do?'—Truly, sinner, I know not what thou canst do, unless thou comest to Jesus Christ; there is not a gleam of hope, or a grain of comfort, in all the universe besides. If thou lamentest thy folly, and seest thy undone state, *with the Lord there is mercy*, abundant mercy, and with the Lord Jesus Christ there is *plenteous redemption*. If thou canst rely on *Christ*, thy iniquities shall be done away like a morning cloud; if thou canst believe in *HIM*, thy debts are cancelled through his blood; and that which thou art unable to perform, he hath fulfilled for thee. See, how consonant this doctrine is to the whole series of Scripture, and the voice of ancient prophecies! See, what an unshared revenue of glory and thanksgiving it brings unto the blessed God:—both supporting the *feeble Christian* amidst all his infirmities, and opening a door of hope to the *awakened sinner*, notwithstanding all his impieties! Surely, then, this precious doctrine is worthy of all acceptance: surely we have reason to receive it with all imaginable thankfulness.

REV. J. HERVEY.

The Doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church stated, and compared with this Doctrine.

THERE is a glorifying righteousness of men in the world to come, as there is a justifying and sanctifying righteousness here. The righteousness, wherewith we shall be clothed in the world to come, is both perfect and inherent. That whereby here we are justified is perfect; but not inherent. That whereby we are sanctified, is inherent, but not perfect. This openeth a way to the understanding of that grand question, which hangeth yet in controversy between us and the church of Rome, about the matter of justifying righteousness.

First, although they imagine, that the mother of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ were, for his honor, and by his special protection, preserved clean from all sin: yet touching the rest, they teach as we do, that infants that never did actually offend, have their natures defiled, destitute of justice, averted from God; that in making man righteous, none do efficiently work with God, but God. They teach as we do, that unto justice no man ever attained, but by the merits of Jesus Christ. They teach as we do, that, although Christ as God, be the efficient; as man, the meritorious cause of our justice: yet in us also there is something required. God is the cause of our natural life; in him we live: but he quickeneth not the body without the soul in the body. Christ hath merited to make us just; but, as a medicine, which is made for health, doth not heal by being made, but by being applied; so, by the merits of Christ there can be no justification without the application of his merit. Thus far we join hands with the church of Rome.

Wherein then do we disagree? We disagree about the nature and essence of the medicine, whereby Christ cureth our disease; about the manner of applying it; about the number, and the power of means, which God requireth in us for the effectual applying thereof to our souls' comfort. When they are required to show what the righteousness is, whereby a Christian man is justified: they answer, that it is a divine spiritual quality; which quality received into the soul, doth first make it to be one of them, who are *born of God*; and, secondly, indue it with power, to bring forth such works as they do that are born of him; even as the soul of man being joined to his body, doth first make him to be of the number of reasonable creatures; and, secondly, enable him to perform the natural functions which are proper to his kind;—that it maketh the soul amiable and gracious in the sight of God, in regard whereof it is termed grace; that it purgeth, purifieth, and washeth out all the stains and pollutions of sins; that by it, through the merit of Christ, we are delivered as from sin, so from eternal death and condemnation, the reward of sin. This grace they will have to be applied by infusion; to the end, that as the body is warm by the heat which is in the body, so the soul might be righteous by

inherent grace: which grace they make capable of increase; as the body may be more and more warm, so the soul more and more justified, according as grace should be augmented; the augmentation whereof is merited by good works, as good works are made meritorious by it. Wherefore, the first receipt of grace in their divinity, is, the first justification; the increase thereof the second justification. As grace may be increased by the merit of good works; so it may be diminished by the demerit of sins venial, it may be lost by mortal sin. Inasmuch, therefore, as it is needful in the one case to repair, in the other to recover the loss which is made: the infusion of grace hath her sundry after-meals; for the which cause they make many ways to apply the infusion of grace. It is applied to infants through baptism, without either faith or works, and in them really it taketh away original sin, and the punishment due unto it; it is applied to infidels and wicked men in the first justification, through baptism without works, yet not without faith; and it taketh away both sins actual and original together, with all whatsoever punishment, eternal or temporal, thereby deserved. Unto such as have attained the first justification, that is to say, the first receipt of grace, it is applied farther by good works to the increase of former grace, which is the second justification. If they work more and more, grace doth more increase, and they are more and more justified. To such as diminished it by venial sins, it is applied by holy water, Ave Marys, crossings, papal salutations, and such like, which serve for reparations of grace decayed. To such as have lost it through mortal sin, it is applied by the sacrament (as they term it) of penance: which sacrament hath force to confer grace anew; yet in such sort, that being so conferred, it hath not altogether so much power as at the first. For it only cleanseth out the stain or guilt of sin committed, and changeth the punishment eternal into a temporal satisfactory punishment here, if time do serve; if not, hereafter to be endured, except it be lightened by masses, works of charity, pilgrimages, fasts, and such like; or else shortened by pardon for term, or by plenary pardon quite removed, and taken away. This is *the mystery of the man of sin*. This maze the church of Rome doth cause her followers to tread, when they ask her the way to

justification. I cannot stand now to unrip this building, and sift it piece by piece; only I will pass it by in few words, that that may befall Babylon in the presence of that which God hath builded, as happened unto *Dagon before the Ark!*

Doubtless, saith the Apostle, I have counted all things loss, and judge them to be dung, that I may win Christ; and to be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith, Phil. iii. 8, 9. Whether they speak of the first or second justification, they make it the essence of a divine quality inherent; they make it righteousness which is in us. If it be in us, then is it ours, as our souls are ours though we have them from God, and can hold them no longer than pleaseth him; for if he withdraw the breath of our nostrils, we fall to dust: but the righteousness wherein we must be found, if we will be justified, is not our own; therefore we cannot be justified by any inherent quality. Christ hath merited righteousness for as many as are found in him. In him God findeth us, if we be faithful, for by faith we are incorporated into Christ. Then, although in ourselves we be altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man which is impious in himself, full of iniquity, full of sin; him being found in Christ through faith, and having his sin remitted through *repentance*; him God upholdeth with a gracious eye, putteth away his sin, by not imputing it, taketh quite away the punishment due thereunto by pardoning it, and accepteth him in Jesus Christ, as perfectly righteous, as if he had fulfilled all that was commanded him in the law: shall I say more perfectly righteous than if himself had fulfilled the whole law? I must take heed what I say: but the Apostle saith, *God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.* Such we are in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God himself. Let it be counted folly or frenzy, or fury, whatsoever; it is our comfort, and our wisdom; we care for no knowledge in the world but this—that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered; that God hath made himself the Son of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God. You see therefore that the church of Rome, in teaching justification by inherent

grace, doth pervert the truth of Christ, and that by the hands of the Apostles we have received otherwise than she teacheth. Now concerning the righteousness of sanctification, we deny it not to be inherent: we grant, that unless we work, we have it not: only we distinguish it as a thing different in nature from the righteousness of justification: we are righteous the one way, by the faith of Abraham; the other way, except we do the works of Abraham, we are not righteous. Of the one, St. Paul, *To him that worketh not, but believeth, faith is counted for righteousness, Rom. iv. 5.* Of the other, St. John, *Qui facit justitiam, justus est*; 'He is righteous which worketh righteousness.' Of the one, St. Paul doth prove by Abraham's example, that we have it of faith without works. Of the other, St. James by Abraham's example, that by works we have it, and not only by faith. St. Paul doth plainly sever these two parts of Christian righteousness one from the other. For in the sixth to the Romans thus he writeth, *Being freed from sin, and made servants to God, ye have your fruit in holiness, and the end everlasting life. Ye are made free from sin, and made servants unto God; Rom. vi.* This is the righteousness of *justification*: *ye have your fruit in holiness*: this is the righteousness of *sanctification*. By the one, we are interested in the right of inheriting; by the other, we are brought to the actual possession of eternal bliss, and so the end of both is *everlasting life*. . . .

Our doctrine is no other than that we have learned at the feet of Christ; namely, that God doth justify the believing man, yet not for the worthiness of his belief, but for the worthiness of him which is believed; God rewardeth abundantly every one which worketh, yet not for any meritorious dignity which is, or can be in the work, but through his mere mercy, by whose commandment he worketh. Contrariwise, their doctrine is—that as pure water of itself hath no savour, but if it pass through a sweet pipe, it taketh a pleasant smell of the pipe through which it passeth; so, although before grace received, our works do neither satisfy nor merit; yet after, they do both the one and the other. Every virtuous action hath then power in such to satisfy; that if we ourselves commit no mortal sin, no heinous crime, whereupon to spend this treasure of satisfaction in our

own behalf, it turneth to the benefit of other men's release, on whom it should please the steward of the house of God to bestow it ; so that we may satisfy for ourselves and others ; but merit only for ourselves. In meriting, our actions do work with two hands ; with one they get their morning stipend, the *increase of grace* ; with the other their evening hire, the *everlasting crown of glory*. Indeed, they teach, that our good works do not these things as they come from us, but as they come from grace in us, which grace in us is another thing in their divinity, than is the mere goodness of God's mercy towards us in Christ Jesus.

If it were not a long deluded spirit which hath possession of their hearts ; were it possible but that they should see how plainly they do herein gainsay the very ground of apostolic faith ? Is this that salvation by grace, whereof so plentiful mention is made in the Scriptures of God ? Was this their meaning, which first taught the world to look for salvation only by Christ ? *By grace*, the Apostle saith, and by grace in such sort as a gift : a thing that cometh *not of ourselves, nor of our works, lest any man should boast*, and say, ' I have wrought out my own salvation.' By grace they confess ; but by grace in such sort, that as many as wear the diadem of bliss, they wear nothing but what they have won. The Apostle, as if he had foreseen how the church of Rome would abuse the world in time by ambiguous terms, to declare in what sense the name of grace must be taken, when we make it the cause of our salvation, saith, *He saved us according to his mercy* : which mercy, although it exclude not the washing of our new birth, the renewing of our hearts by the Holy Ghost, the means, the virtues, the duties which God requireth of our hands which shall be saved ; yet it is so repugnant unto merits, that to say, we are saved for the worthiness of any thing which is ours, is to deny we are saved by grace. Grace bestoweth freely ; and therefore justly requireth the glory of that which is bestowed. We deny the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ; we abuse, disannul, and annihilate the benefit of his bitter passion, if we rest in these proud imaginations, that life is deservedly ours, that we merit it, and that we are worthy of it.

HOOKE.

Some remarkable Confessions of celebrated Roman Catholic divines relative to this Doctrine.

BUT, in fine, whatsoever determination was made at the council of Trent upon this matter, I desire the reader to consider that there always have been a great many Christians within the communion of the church of Rome, who have only apparently followed the decrees of that council ; and who, after all, have followed the doctrines of the Gospel and of antiquity. I say moreover, that they have strongly opposed them, and that it was out of pure necessity that they revoked them at the hour of death. So true is it, that conscience cannot always be seduced by the errors of the understanding ; it is true also, that when men are approaching before the throne of God's justice, it is difficult for them to preserve that spirit of pride which is in the Roman school. One can hardly produce a more lively proof of the truth of this reflection, than the instance of Cardinal Hosius, who presided at the council of Trent under Pius IV. These are some of the expressions of his last will : ' I approach the throne of thy grace, O Father of mercies and of all consolation, to the end that I may obtain mercy, and find grace in thy sight. Whensoever it shall please thee to demand back again that which thou hast committed to me, into thy hands I resign my spirit ; which if thou shouldst look upon as it is in itself, I confess it is not worthy to appear in the presence of thy Majesty, for it is full of all kind of pollutions ; but if thou hast respect to the blood of thy Son, wherein it has been washed and purified, and to those bitter torments which he suffered for our sins, that he might render us acceptable in thy sight ; they are worthy that for their sake thou shouldst give it eternal life, which he purchased at so great a price.' He desires that God would not look upon him in himself, but in the face of Jesus Christ. ' I am not worthy,' says he, ' that thou shouldst behold me with the eyes of thy Majesty : but as it is most worthy, that for the sake of his death and passion, thou shouldst not only look upon me, but crown me also ; it is therefore that I come unto thee, most dear Father, and that without any merits, but those inestimable ones of thy Son Jesus Christ, my Lord and my Redeemer. I bring thee the

merit of that death wherein alone I place all my hope and my confidence; that is my righteousness, my satisfaction, my redemption, and my propitiation. 'The death of my Lord is my merit.' And after that, having recited the words of St. Bernard in his 61st Sermon upon the Canticles, which I have cited before, he adds, speaking of the blood of Jesus Christ, 'Regard that price, for that price sake declare me worthy to be placed among the sheep at thy right hand.' See here what the conscience says, when it beholds its sins, and its good works; and it will never speak otherwise, especially at the hour of death, where it scatters away its illusions; except the church of Rome does blot out of her books the questions which are made to dying persons, because they contain a clear and express abjuration of the doctrine of merits of condignity. And though the indexes made by the order of the Council of Trent have attempted to raze them out, yet they have hitherto never been able to do it in the Roman communion. And if the priests, who ought to make use of them about dying persons, do suppress them, to accommodate themselves to the designs of the Council, and of the *Index Expurgatorius*, such, at least, as do not acknowledge the tribunal of the Inquisition, do retain this truth, as that which does afford all the consolation to dying persons that they can have. . . .

The doctrine of the merit of good works is justly looked upon by Protestants as one of the opinions of the present church of Rome.

First, The Council of Trent* does anathematise those who deny that a man justified by good works does truly merit eternal life. Vêga, who wrote his books of justification during the time that he was at the council, does maintain,† that the Council, by 'truly meriting,' did understand 'meriting *de condigno*.' Now the difference betwixt merit *de congruo*, and merit *de condigno*, used in the Roman church, is this:—Merit *de congruo* signifies a good work, which is worthy of divine reward, not out of any obligation from justice, but out of a principle of fitness, (or congruity,) and from the free bounty of God;—merit *ex condigno* is a good work, to which reward is due from a principle of justice, as well because of the worth, or dignity of the work, as because of the worth of the person that has done it.

Secondly, It is the opinion of the divines of the church of Rome, as Bellarmine has determined;‡ Gregory de Valentia maintains it also for a certain § point of faith.

Thirdly, The Inquisition did most evidently declare it, when it did expunge for heretical, out of several books of that church, such propositions as did deny the merit of good works. The same thing also was done by Cardinal Quiroga, in his *Index Expurgatorius*, which he composed according to the order of the Council of Trent.

Fourthly, The same spirit did appear in the divines of the church of Rome, when they advised those of their communion to take heed of the opinion of such ancient authors as do oppose the merit of good works. Which was done at Rome, in Spain, in France, with respect to such authors as they could not any longer suppress. Which matter of fact is so evident, that nothing but the height of impudence can be able to gainsay or deny it.

If it comes once to be fully acknowledged that the church of Rome is of this opinion, we may justly charge it with one of the proudest errors that it could ever possibly be guilty of; and with having renounced that grand principle of Christianity, which does look upon that reward which God does vouchsafe to good works, as the effect not of commutative justice, which gives so much for so much, but as the effect of the faithfulness of God to such as should obey his commandments, though their obedience has nothing in itself able to merit such a reward. For so saith St. Paul, *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*, Rom. viii. 18.

Moreover, we are very sure, that if the church of Rome, in this article of her belief, be quite of another opinion than St. Paul, and the whole stream of antiquity was of, for the eleven first ages of the church, which has sufficiently been proved; so neither does it agree with the most eminent doctors of the Latin church, which have been since the eleventh age. To prove this, is the design of this discourse, that there may be no refuge left for this error in this matter.

I begin with that exhortation which Anselme, archbishop of Canterbury,|| required

‡ De Justif. l. 5. c. 17.

§ Tom. 2. Disp. 8. q. 6. punct. i. Sect. i.

|| Oper. p. 291.

* Sess. 6. Can. 32. † Op. de Justific. q. 5.

should be given to a certain monk when he was dying, after this manner: Do you believe that you cannot be saved, but by the death of Jesus Christ? *Ans.* I do believe so. Do you heartily thank him for it? *Ans.* I do. Be you therefore ever thanking him for it as long as you live, and put your whole trust and confidence in that death alone; and let that be your only safeguard. And if the Lord will enter into judgment with thee, say thus: O Lord, unless I hold the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and thee, and thy judgment, I am not able to plead with thee. If he tells you, that you have merited damnation, say unto him, I hold the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my ill deserts: and instead of those merits which I ought to have, but alas! have not, I offer to thee the merit of his most meritorious passion. Let him say moreover, I hold the death of Jesus Christ between me and thine anger; after which, let him add, Into thy hands, &c., and he shall die with assurance, and he shall never see death.

After this manner did Anselme, who died in the year 1109, require that a monk, that is, such a one as, according to their opinion, has merits enough, both for himself and others, should make his confession upon his death-bed. Concerning which action of his, one may observe, first, That this Anselme was canonized, and his name is to be found, upon the 21st of April, in the Roman Martyrology, which shows that he was no teacher of heresy, (as they call heresy.) Secondly, That this exhortation which he required should be given to persons that were dying, was looked upon as so excellent a one all Europe over, that there is scarce any book, belonging to the church affairs, wherein it is not to be found. Thirdly, That the church of Rome itself did own it, as Cardinal Hosius does witness.* Fourthly, That it was never charged with containing any pernicious doctrine till the popes, and the inquisitors of the faith, and the Council of Trent, caused those articles, which we just now took notice of, to be blotted out, as contrary to the belief of their church. Fifthly, That notwithstanding this condemnation of it by the *Index Expurgatorius*, it is still retained in France, and may be seen in that edition of the book entitled *Ordo Baptizandi*, which was published in the year 1614, where the same questions and an-

swers are now to be seen, which were formerly condemned by Cardinal Quiroga.

One had need to transcribe the greatest part of St. Bernard's works, to produce all those places, wherein that Father has shown himself to be of the same opinion with St. Anselme. Thus he speaks in his sixty-first sermon upon the Canticles: 'In the mercy of the Lord is my merit; I am rich in merits, seeing he is rich in compassion. As the mercies of the Lord are numberless, so are my merits. If my conscience does accuse me of a great many sins, where sins do abound, there does grace much more abound. . . shall I sing of my own righteousnesses? O Lord, I will make mention of thy righteousness only, which is mine also, because thou hast made it so.'

He speaks still more particularly, at the end of his book, of Grace, and of Free-will. 'How,' says he, 'does the Apostle call that crown, which he says is laid up for him, a *crown of righteousness*? Is it not because one may justly claim, as a due debt, whatsoever is never so freely promised? He says, in effect, *I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him*. And because he believed him, who had promised him, he does with confidence demand that which had been promised. The promise is of mercy, but it ought to be performed in justice. The crown then which St. Paul does wait for, is a *crown of righteousness*, not of his own righteousness, but of God's. For it is but just, that he should pay what he owes, and he owes whatsoever he has promised. So then, it is the justice of God only, on which the Apostle does rely. . . If any one, therefore, would give our merits their due name, they are certain seeds of hope, motives to charity, marks of a secret predestination, presages of future happiness, the way to a kingdom, but by no means the cause which does entitle us to it.'

It is impossible to blast this proud doctrine of merits of condignity, more effectually than St. Bernard does in these words. The same sense is repeated in some others of his works; as in his first Sermon of the Annunciation, and in the fifteenth Sermon on *Quis habitat*, and especially in his hundred-and-ninetieth Epistle against the heresies of Petrus Abelardus, who was one of the first, after the Pelagians, who did oppose this doctrine of the Gospel.

* Confess. Fidei Petric. cap. 73.

We may observe in the mean time, First, That St. Bernard was canonized by Alexander III. in the year 1165, viz. twelve years after his death: Secondly, That Pope Innocent II. does approve of this Epistle of St. Bernard's against Abelardus, as may be seen by that epistle which he wrote to the archbishops of Sens and of Rheims, to their suffragans, and to St. Bernard himself, and which is the 194th amongst St. Bernard's Epistles: Thirdly, That he was the most learned man in his time: Fourthly, That he was the founder of an eminent order, which is dispersed throughout all the western part of the world; and that a great number of abbots, bishops and cardinals have come out of his school.

Petrus, abbot of St. Rhemy — at Rheims, and afterwards bishop of Chartres, wrote these words a little before the year 1170:* 'That the conscience of him who does make confession of his greatest sins, does stand in need of a handful of the blood of Jesus Christ. Instead of dipping the tip of his finger in water, let him wash his hands, not in the blood of a sinner, but in the death of his Redeemer. Let him dip his finger in the place where the nails were.' He does afterward compare the blood of Jesus Christ upon the cross, to that of the lamb which was sprinkled by the priest; and from thence takes occasion to express himself thus: 'Dip then thy finger, and sprinkle it against the veil of the sanctuary, to the end that the blood of our Lord's passion may serve thee for a key to open the gates of heaven.'

The same author says also in another work of his,† 'We must every day present before God, not our own merit, which is evil, but the privilege of his nature, and his mercy.' This is the constant doctrine of the twelfth age.

Urban IV. lived about the middle of the thirteenth age. He is famous for instituting the Feast of the Sacrament, upon the account of a pretended revelation to a certain religious woman of the country of Liege. There is a commentary of his upon the *Miserere*, where he shows, that he does follow the same doctrine concerning the merit of good works, which was universally received before his time. First, He protests that he does appeal from justice to mercy, according to the exhortation of St. Anselme. Secondly, He does con-

fess that there is nothing in him able to merit that glory which he does wait for. Thirdly, He declares that mercy has no respect to our merits, but only to our misery. Fourthly, He does make use of such terms as these: I do not beg for my own merits' sake, or for thy justice or my own. . . or for my works' sake, wherein I have miserably gone astray, but for thy great mercy. 'Non peto secundum meritum meum, vel secundum justitiam tuam vel meam. . . vel secundum opera mea, quibus miser deviavi, sed secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.'

Thomas Aquinas, who was contemporary with this pope, speaks thus:† 'No man can make any pretence of merit before God, unless by supposing a divine disposition, by virtue of which, man does obtain of God by his operation, *quasi mercedem*, in manner of a salary as it were, that for which God has given him the power of working.' This is the doctrine of the Gospel. But see here the leaven which Thomas adds to it, and which has so very much soured the whole mass of the divinity of the church of Rome. The same Thomas, in the third article of the same question, with some other divines in his time, does maintain, That because of the operation and the grace of the Holy Spirit wrought in the faithful, and from whence good works do proceed, their good works do merit *de condigno*; which is so very weak a foundation, that one might naturally draw from it a doctrine quite contrary to that which Thomas Aquinas has gathered from it. Upon which account alone, Vasquez thought himself obliged to refute it. The same leaven is to be found also in St. Bonaventure, in Gulielmus Antissiodorensis, and in Gulielmus Parisiensis. But all this could not hinder, but that the holy doctrine should still be preserved in the chairs and schools of the Latin church.

Ægidius de Roma is very famous both for his birth and dignities, but especially for having undertaken the defence of St. Thomas. The sum of which has been critically examined by an eminent divine of Oxford, in a book entitled, *Thomæ Reprehensorium*.§ In the mean time he has made no difficulty of deserting St. Thomas in the matter of merit. He does expressly say,|| First, That there must be some equality between the merit and its reward; and that it is this equality, which is the foun-

* Tract. de Panibus, cap. 15.

† Lib. i. de Tabern. Mosaici Exposit. p. 929. B.P.

‡ 1, 2. Q. 114. A. 1. § Auc. Miræ. c. 409.

|| In 2. dist. 27. Q. i. Art. 2.

dation of justice; then he concludes, that where there is not such an equality, there can be no justice. Secondly, He maintains that the faithful are considered in respect of God, as servants are in respect of their masters, children of their parents, and the wife of her husband. He could not have spoken more expressly of justice or of merit. Thirdly, He shows how that our Saviour Jesus Christ declared this truth, where he says, *When ye shall have done all those things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do*, Luke xvii. 10. For a servant cannot do more than he ought; for whatsoever he does, is but his duty. There is not therefore any thing simply just, nor simply a merit between a master and a servant, but there may be something like it. This is the opinion of him whom they commonly call the prince of divines.

Raymondus de Rochefort, penitentiary of Gregory IX. and the third general of the order of the Jacobins, composed at the same time a summary of the cases of repentance, an abridgment of which may be found in that place, where the author does set down the confession of dying persons, in the same terms that St. Anselme had prescribed to them. There is no need of repeating them: I suppose it was made a little after Raymondus's work was published, because there are so many ancient manuscripts of it to be found in libraries.

Durandus, bishop of Puy, and afterwards bishop of Meaux, does solemnly confute the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, about the merit of good works.* And he does it so notably, both by Scripture and reason, that the divines of the church of Rome are forced to look upon him as an antagonist of their Thomas Aquinas. Yet for all that, this Durandus taught divinity at Rome, and at Paris they had generally a great reverence and esteem for him.

Moreover it is plain, that this was not his opinion in particular, but was the general belief of most people: First, that very year in which Durandus died, viz. in the year 1333, Gulielmus de Montrotier published a treatise of his, for a direction for curates, in which these words do occur upon the Lord's prayer: † 'But why do we rather say, Thy kingdom come, than say Let us come into thy kingdom? I answer, that it is to show us, that no man does

obtain the glory of paradise by his own merits, but purely by the grace of God, according to that of the Apostle, *not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us*. It is therefore we say *adveniat*, that is to say, Let thy grace come unto us, and not, Let us arrive at that; because, as was said, we cannot arrive at it by our own merits.'

Secondly, Nicholas de Lyra has made notes upon the whole Bible, and has preserved that little knowledge of the Holy Scriptures which did remain before the Reformation. He wrote these words, at the same time, upon the tenth chapter of St. John: 'The glory of heaven cannot properly be called wages, but a kind of free gift, inasmuch as that only which is paid as a recompense for some labor, is called wages. And the reason of this is, because that an inheritance is distinguished from wages properly so called; just as a son, to whom the inheritance does belong, ought to be distinguished from an hireling, to whom wages are due. Thus the glory of heaven is given to the faithful, as an inheritance is to children, and has not therefore the nature of wages.'

Thirdly, Simon de Cassia, who died in the year 1348, speaks after the same manner, ‡ upon those words, *Call the laborers, and give them hire; Jesus Christ*, saith he, 'has made use of a soft word, when he said not, their hire, because no man does merit rewards for his good works, nor indeed the greatest wages. Upon which account it is, that he does not add their, but hire only, viz. that which he has from all eternity prepared to bestow upon those that work righteousness.'

The famous Richard, archbishop of Armagh, in his treatise against the errors of the Armenians, speaking of the word *Mercies*, does explain himself in these terms: § 'Seeing some certain sort of recompense ought to be given to any one, not upon the account of the condignity of his work, but upon the account of the promise, and so also of the justice of him who gives it, and who promised it only in general; let this sort of recompense be given in any degree whatsoever, one may still call it wages for work.'

Bradwardin, chancellor of Oxford, and afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, does attack the Pelagians with a vast volume, || wherein he overthrows the doctrine of

* N. 2. dist. 27. q. 2.

† Ch. 2. du traité 3. part. 2.

‡ Lib. 6. c. 21. § Lib. 12. c. 21. || A. 1350.

merit of condignity in several places, vigorously maintaining this proposition, that 'merits are not the cause of eternal reward,' as the doctrine of the sacred Scriptures, and of antiquity.

If any one does still desire a stronger proof than the testimony of these three persons does afford, though because writing in the same time, in places far distant from one another, and upon a popular subject, one might easily believe them for what they say; I may allege the university of Paris, where Guy, a professor and a Carmelite, having propounded this proposition against a Jacobin, 'man does merit eternal life *de condigno*, that is to say, in such a manner, that unless it were given him, he would be injured, and God would wrong himself;' he was forced to recant it as false, heretical, and blasphemous. This was done in the year 1353, by the order of the chancellor of the university, and of several other doctors of the faculty at Paris.

After this recantation, we may see many eminent divines following the opinion of St. Anselme and St. Bernard. One Jacobus de Hauteville, professor at Paris, whose opinion Marsilius ab Ingen does take notice of. Marsilius ab Ingen does formally maintain, that our works, whether considered in themselves, or as the fruit of the grace of God working with us, cannot merit *ex condigno*, which he proves all along by Scripture: and he does determine, on the contrary, that whatsoever is called merit, does depend upon the acceptance of God, through the merit of Jesus Christ. Gerardus de Zutphen, who died four years before Marsilius, was plainly of the same opinion.

Towards the end of that age, Raymundus Jordanus, abbot of Celles in Berry, was of this opinion. They published his books under the name of *Idiota*, but Father Raynaud has made it appear that they were this Raymundus's. Thus he speaks: 'Tribulation,' says he, 'does not suit well with a past crime which thou dost pardon, nor with the present grace of consolation which thou dost give, nor with the future glory which thou dost freely promise.' These words did displease the censors of the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, who therefore put a *cautè legendum* at the margin;—they were so much afraid, lest they should wholly attribute the praise of our salvation to the mercy of God.

The doctrine of St. Anselme was not for-

* Lib. 2. Contempl. p. 445. T. 5. B. P.

gotten in the fifteenth age, which furnishes us with a great many eminent witnesses who did oppose the merit of condignity.

Petrus de Alliaco, bishop of Cambray, and afterwards a cardinal, does maintain that merits are but improperly called the cause of recompense.

Gerson, chancellor of the university of Paris, a person admired all Europe over in the time of the Council of Constance, does, in his treatise of the Art of Dying, put these words in the mouth of a dying believer; 'O Lord, I implore thy pardon, not for any value of my own merits, but by the virtue and efficacy of thy most holy passion, by the which thou wert willing to redeem me, even me that was miserable, and didst vouchsafe to purchase paradise for me by the price of thy blood. The same Gerson, when he made his will, concluded it with this verse,

Spes mea tu Jesus es, gratia, non opera.

Johannes Waldensis, whose works were examined at Rome, and approved of by Pope Martin V, does at the same time express himself in as precise a manner. When he saw a great party of Thomas Aquinas's opinion concerning merit of condignity, he expresses himself thus: 'I take him for a most holy divine, for a most faithful Catholic, and most agreeing with the Holy Scriptures, who does simply renounce any such merit, and does avow with the moderation of the Apostle and the Scriptures, that no man does simply merit the kingdom of heaven, but by the grace of God, or by the will of him who bestows it.' He proves his opinion by the Sacred Scripture, by the Fathers, by the canon of the Mass, which, speaking of the saints, do import thus much, 'into whose company we pray thee to admit us, not regarding our merit, but granting us pardon.' And in another place he says, 'To the end that we, who do not trust in the quality of merits, may merit not thy judgment but thy mercy.'

I confess, that Waldensis, as learned a man as he was, does take those words of the Mass, *non æstimator meriti, sed donator veniæ*, in a wrong sense. It is certain, by the expositions of the ages before Waldensis, that the word *meritum* does not in this place signify good works, but sins; the sense is, 'not regarding our sins, but granting us pardon for them.' Some of those divines have notwithstanding followed the error of Waldensis; but if it be

a fault, the great approbation which they have for the works of Waldensis has authorised it. And it is very probable, that if so learned a man as Waldensis could thus make use of this place of the Mass, there were a great many divines in his time, who understood it in the same sense as he did, more regarding the sound of the terms, than their true signification. However it was, see what he adds; 'God,' saith he, 'according to this Article, has no regard to our merit, either of congruity, or of condignity, but to his own grace, will, and mercy. It is therefore very injurious to our Saviour, and him who crowns us so freely, to dispute so much about merits, without speaking of his grace.'

Paul, bishop of Burgos, one of the most knowing prelates of his time in the Holy Scriptures, did so exactly follow the same opinion, that Cardinal Bellarmine thought himself obliged to join him with Thomas Waldensis, as one of those that did most strongly oppose Thomas Aquinas's opinions concerning this matter.

Biel, who was the first that taught in the university of Tubing, towards the end of the fifteenth age, does explain the merit of condignity in such a manner, as does quite overthrow the same opinions of Thomas, referring all to God's acceptance, positively denying the goodness of an action to be the ground of God's rewarding it, but only his promise, which is the opinion of the ancients, and of Protestants.

Pope Adrian the Sixth, Cardinal Cajetan, and Conrard Kœlin, can easily inform us, what was taught in their time, that is to say, in the first thirty years of the sixteenth age.

See what Adrian had written in the 4. Sententiarum before he was Pope. 'Our merits,' saith he, 'are like a staff of reed, whereon if a man lean, it breaks and pierceth the hand of him that leaneth thereon.' He imitating Isaiah herein, does compare the righteousnesses of man to a piece of menstruous cloth. 'Our Saviour,' writes he, 'then speaks rightly, when he says, *When ye have done all those things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants.*' This doctor, being afterward made pope in the year 1522, caused his works to be printed at Rome, which was done without any contradiction; neither did he ever retract any thing of this doctrine.

Cardinal Cajetan is famous for his con-

* De Sacram. Euchar. post initium.

ferences with Luther. But as he in his latter days did apply himself to study, and comment upon the Holy Scriptures, see how he expresseth himself upon the sixth chapter, verse 23, of the Epistle to the Romans, following herein the conceptions of St. Austin: 'St. Paul does not say that eternal life is the wages of righteousness, but the *gift of God*, to the end that we may understand that we do not merit eternal life by our merits, but by the free gift of God.' This is his opinion at last. For I know, that though this famous Thomist had before pushed things so far as to maintain, that the good works of the righteous do merit eternal life *ex condigno*, yet there was never any divine covenant made thereupon; as Bellarmine does confess, *ubi supra cap. 16.*

Conrard Kœlin, commenting upon the 'Sum of St. Thomas,' does reflect upon St. Thomas's opinion, that good works receive *quasi mercedem*, that is, as it were a reward, upon the account of the promise of God made to good works, and says that he expressed himself thus; 'because properly speaking, man does not receive a reward, because there is nothing just or due in this retribution,' and he maintains, that in this respect, 'it cannot properly be called a reward.'

Erasmus is so express in this matter in many places, that he was censured for it; and was put in the *Index Expurgatorius*.

Didacus Stella, a famous Cordelier, and confessor to Cardinal Granville, has past through the *Index Expurgatorius* of *Quinoga*, for having taught upon St. Luke, that we do not merit blessedness *ex condigno*.

Josseus Clichtoveus, an eminent doctor of Paris, and a regular of Chartres, does make all the same reflections upon those words of the Mass, *non æstimator meriti, sed donator veniæ*, against the merit of good works, which Waldensis had done before him. Which shows, that our Reformers have only followed the sense which the most eminent divines of the church of Rome had put upon those words. This is in his Elucid. Ecclesiast. p. 156, where he says that which Luther, treating upon the same subject, could not have said more.

Johannes Ferus, an eminent Cordelier, and preacher at Mayence, has followed the same opinion, as may be seen in his pieces printed at Paris, with the privilege and approbation of the Sorbonne, in the year 1560. It is true, that, following the

† In 2 Thom. q. 114. art. 1.

style of the Inquisition, they have since expunged those places out of his works. And probably this is the reason why there is another edition of them printed at Rome.

Claudius Espensæus, the famous bishop of Evreux, who was present as a doctor at the Council of Trent, does defend Erasmus's opinion, in his Comment upon the Second Epistle to Timothy, and fourth chapter, as conformable to the sentiments of St. Austin, declaring with that ancient doctor, that the *crown of righteousness* is so called, because it is just that God should grant that which he has in his mercy promised, although the thing be not due.

There is a work of Abbot Louis Blasius, who died in the year 1566, printed in the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, under the name of Abbot Dacrianus. It is called *Speculum Monachorum*, where he speaks in several places after such a manner, as shows that he was of an opinion directly opposite to merits of condignity. Thus he speaks of the faithful; 'They do not,' says he, 'confidently place the hope of their salvation in the number, or in the merit of the good works which they do, but in the liberty of the children of God, which they have obtained by the blood of Jesus Christ.'*

This is the history of what passed, from the twelfth age till the Council of Trent, about the belief of *merit of condignity*.

PRESERVATIVE AGAINST POPERY.

The Doctrine of Justification by Faith Only, leads not to Licentiousness.

A TRUE and lively faith is opposite to the feigned faith of the hypocrite; and a true faith incites a man to good works through love. He, who would be a Christian, must be a believer; but no man is a sound believer, if works of charity do not follow his faith. Thus, on both hands, the Apostle shuts hypocrites out of the kingdom of God. On the left hand, he shuts out all such as depend on their works for salvation, when he says, *Neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision*; that is, no kind of work, but faith alone, without any dependence on what we do, avails before God. On the right, he excludes all slothful, idle persons, who are disposed to say, If faith justifies us without works, then let us have no anxiety respecting good actions; let us only take care and believe, that we may do whatever we please.—Not so, ye enemies of all godli-

ness. It is true, Paul tells you, that faith alone, without works, justifies;—however, he also tells you, that a true faith, after it has justified, does not permit a man to slumber in indolence, but that it worketh by love.

The liberty of the Gospel is an inestimable thing; but take care that ye use it not as an occasion to the flesh.

Satan has not stirred up an evil either more extensive or more destructive than this; namely, when men abuse their Christian liberty to licentiousness. So the Apostle Jude laments: *There are crept in unawares certain unholy men, which turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness*, Jude, ver. 4. For the flesh does not understand the doctrine of grace. Therefore when it hears that we are justified by faith only, it abuses and perverts the doctrine by reasoning thus; 'If we are without law, we may live just as we please.' . . .

Truly religious persons crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; and hence their sins do not finally ruin them. For if they obey the flesh by gratifying its concupiscence, they infallibly lose their faith and the Holy Ghost. Moreover, if they do not abhor their sins, sincerely repent, and return to Christ, that they may recover their faith and the Holy Ghost, they will die in their sins. Wherefore I can speak no comfort to those, who dream they have faith, and yet live in sin. Against all such there is a dreadful sentence in force; namely, *They that live after the flesh shall die*. And further, *the works of the flesh are manifest*;—*adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, &c.* and such like: THEY WHO DO SUCH THINGS, SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The severe threatenings of Almighty God against sin, have a due effect upon the minds of true believers, so as to deter them from breaking his laws. They arm themselves with the word of God, with faith and with prayer, and do not give way to the lusts of the flesh. In fact, they so resist the flesh as to nail it to the cross, with all its sinful desires. Hence it is that the flesh, though yet alive and capable of showing some signs of motion, cannot perform what it would, being bound hand and foot, and nailed fast to the cross. Such are the principles, and such the practice of truly pious persons. The same

* T. 5. D. 16. p. 708.

important truths may be expressed a little differently, thus; The faithful, while they live on earth, do actually crucify the flesh;—that is, though they are sensible of its lustings, they do not obey them. Furnished with the armour of God, namely, faith, hope, and the sword of the Spirit, they oppose the natural, or carnal man; and with these spiritual arms, as it were with nails, fix him to the cross of Christ; and compel him, against his will, to be subject to the spiritual man or new creature. Afterwards, when they die, they entirely put off the carnal man; and they will rise from the dead with a body incorruptible, and free from sinful affections and lusts.

To teach the doctrine of Justification by Faith without works, and at the same time to insist on the necessity of good works, it must be owned, is a matter of considerable difficulty and danger. For unless the ministers of Christ be wise and faithful dispensers of the divine mysteries, and know how to divide the word of truth rightly, the distinct provinces of faith and works will be confounded. Both these provinces should be explained and impressed on the mind with the greatest diligence, yet in such a manner, that each of them may preserve its proper bounds. Otherwise, if works only are taught, as is the case in the pope's kingdom, faith is lost. Again, if nothing but faith is inculcated, carnal men soon begin to dream that there is no need of good works. How careful is Paul to avoid being misunderstood! In the fourteenth verse of the fifth chapter, he had observed that the whole law was fulfilled in one word, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. Indeed!! an objector might say,—Then if so, a man, by works of charity, may fulfil the law and be justified!—which is contrary to the whole Epistle. No, says the Apostle, I have neither forgotten, nor do I now contradict my former argumentation concerning faith. I am precisely of the same opinion; and that ye may perceive me to argue consistently, I add, *Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*, Gal. v. 16. I do not mean that ye can be justified by the law; but this I mean: there are two principles of action within you, flesh and spirit; and I exhort you to obey the latter, that ye may be enabled to resist the former. It is but to a certain degree that ye can resist it; ye cannot entirely

put off the flesh or kill it; and therefore, when I direct you to *walk in the Spirit*, I sufficiently indicate to you the impossibility of your being justified by works of charity. . . .

You now see therefore how it is that FAITH alone is not sufficient; and yet that faith alone JUSTIFIES; because if the faith be of the right sort, it is infallibly connected with a spirit of true benevolence. But this spirit of benevolence or LOVE cannot endure the works of the flesh; and thus it obeys the law, and attains the kingdom of God. Hence every thing is to be ascribed to faith, as faith is to the word, and the word to the divine compassion in the sending of the Apostles and preachers; so that all our sufficiency is of God, from whom cometh every best gift.

THESE ARE THE POINTS OF DOCTRINE which ought to be explained to the people: and in the very order in which the Apostle lays them down in this Epistle. For example; let a man first learn to despair of his own strength; let him hear the word of evangelical faith; hearing, let him believe it; believing, let him call upon God; calling upon him, let him find, as he will find, that he is heard; being heard of God, let him receive the spirit of love; receiving this spirit, let him walk in the same, and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; but let him crucify them; lastly, being crucified with Christ, let him rise from the dead, and possess the kingdom of heaven.

LUTHER.

We ourselves do not teach Christ alone, excluding our own faith, unto justification; Christ alone, excluding our own works unto sanctification; Christ alone, excluding the one or the other unnecessary unto salvation. It is a childish cavil, wherewith, in the matter of justification, our adversaries do so greatly please themselves, exclaiming, that we tread all Christian virtues under our feet, and require nothing in Christians but faith, because we teach that faith alone justifieth: whereas by this speech we never meant to exclude either hope or charity from being always joined as inseparable mates with faith in the man that is justified; or works from being added as necessary duties, required at the hands of every justified man: but to shew that faith is the only hand which putteth on Christ unto justification; and Christ the only garment, which, being

so put on, covereth the shame of our defiled natures, hideth the imperfection of our works, preserveth us blameless in the sight of God, before whom, otherwise, the weakness of our faith were cause sufficient to make us culpable, yea, to shut us from the kingdom of heaven, where nothing that is not absolute can enter. That our dealing with them be not as childish as theirs with us: when we hear of salvation by Christ alone, considering that (alone) as an exclusive particle, we are to note what it doth exclude, and where. If I say, 'Such a judge only ought to determine such a case,' all things incident to the determination thereof, besides the person of the judge, as laws, depositions, evidences, &c. are not hereby excluded; persons are not excluded from witnessing herein, or assisting, but only from determining and giving sentence. How then is our salvation wrought by Christ alone? Is it our meaning, that nothing is requisite to man's salvation, but Christ to save, and he to be saved quietly without any more ado? No, we acknowledge no such foundation. As we have received, so we teach, that besides the bare and naked work, wherein Christ without any other associate finished all the parts of our redemption, and purchased salvation himself alone; for conveyance of this eminent blessing unto us, many things are of necessity required, as, to be known and chosen of God before the foundation of the world; in the world to be called, justified, sanctified; after we have left the world, to be received unto glory; Christ in every of these hath somewhat which he worketh alone. Through him, according to the eternal purpose of God before the foundation of the world, born, crucified, buried, raised, &c. we were in a gracious acceptance, known unto God long before we were seen of men: God knew us, loved us, was kind to us in Jesus Christ; in him we were elected to be heirs of life. Thus far God through Christ hath wrought in such sort alone, that ourselves are mere patients, working no more than dead and senseless matter, wood, stone, or iron, doth in the artificer's hands; no more than clay, when the potter appointeth it to be framed for an honorable use; nay, not so much: for the matter whereupon the craftsman worketh he chooseth, being moved by the fitness which is in it to serve his turn; in us no such thing. Touching the rest which is laid for the foundation of

our faith, it importeth farther, That by him we are called, that we have redemption, remission of sins through his blood, health by his stripes, justice by him; that he doth sanctify his church, and make it glorious to himself, that entrance into joy shall be given us by him; yea, all things by him alone. Howbeit, not so by him alone, as if in us to our vocation, the hearing of the Gospel; to our justification, faith; to our sanctification, the fruits of the Spirit; to our entrance into rest, perseverance in hope, in faith, in holiness, were not necessary.

HOOKE.

Of good works.—By this same Apostle in this chapter, good works are divided into three ranks, for they are either works of piety toward God, or of equity toward our neighbour, or sobriety toward ourselves: and these bring out a threefold fruit, most sweet and excellent: for by them, first, God is glorified; secondly, thy neighbour is edified; thirdly, thy own conscience comforted, and confirmed in the assurance of thy salvation. Of the first speaks the Apostle: *Let servants shew all faithfulness, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*: there we see that our good works are an ornament to the Gospel. Of the second, and first also, speaks our Saviour: *Let your works so shine before men, that they seeing them, may glorify your Father that is in heaven*; there we see that God is glorified by our godly life, and men thereby are edified and moved to do it. Of the third speaks St. Peter: *Make sure your calling and election by well doing*. As every tree is known by the fruit, so works of grace prove those that have them to be a tree planted by predestination in the *paradise of God*, by that *river of the water of life*, and that therefore thy leaf shall not fade, and thy root shall not perish, because thou art rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus, and growest in him, who shall for ever conserve the sap of grace in thy soul.

The adversaries calumniate us, and call us enemies to good works; but God forbid we were so! We condemn no good works, only we condemn their presumptuous opinion of the merit of good works. Meriting causes of salvation they are not, yet are they witnessing effects thereof, without which a man cannot be saved; not that we are saved by them, but because

that justifying faith, which whereby we are saved cannot be without them; *for faith works by love*. In the act of justification, we affirm, good works have no place; for a man must first be justified before he do any good, *Nam sequuntur justificatum*: in the work again of sanctification, they want no place: this doctrine they challenge of novelty, but indeed it is apostolic, consonant also to the doctrine of the ancient and primitive church.

For that assertion of the Apostle, *We conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law*, is equivalent to this, that a man is justified by faith only. And from the Apostle, the ancient fathers have drawn this position, *Sola fide justificamur*. Basil, in his Treatise, *De Confessione fidei*, hath it: 'We have not whereof to glory of righteousness, seeing we are justified by faith only in Christ Jesus;' and more notable is that testimony of Ambrose, *Justificantur gratis quia nihil operantes, neque vicem, reddentes, sola fide justificati sunt, dono Dei*; by this one sentence he cuts away from justification their works, both of congruity and condignity, and annulleth their vain distinction of a first and second justification; and in plain terms he ascribes our justification to faith only in Christ. With these concurs Augustine: *Quod autem sequitur, propterea vos non auditis quia ex Deo non estis, iis dictum est, qui non fuerant credituri ea fide, qua sola possent a peccatorum obligatione liberari*. And passing by many others, we add only the testimony of Bernard: 'Whosoever he be that is pricked in his heart with sorrow of his sins, and hungers and thirsts for righteousness, let him believe in Thee, who justifieth sinners; and so, being justified by faith only, he shall have peace with God.' Let them now cease to glory of antiquity; let them think shame to charge us with novelty, if they be not past all bounds of shame; for it is manifest to the indifferent reader that we teach no other way now, than the Apostles and approved Doctors of elder times have taught before us.

But leaving this, I wish disputing about good works were turned into doing: we have all learned in this age to put good works out of the chair of merit; and justly, for none should sit in that chair but Christ Jesus; but we have not all learned to give them their own place in the matter of salvation: though they be not, as I said, meriting causes, yet are they witnesses of thy

faith, and seals of thy salvation: thou art not now justified by them, yet shalt thou be judged by them, and tried whether thou wert justified in Christ Jesus or not. Oh that our fruitless professors would consider this! Tell me, I pray you, what have ye to witness with you, that ye are Christians? Your word says ye are so; but all your works witness against you: your unclean eyes, your dissolute speech, your vain apparel, your polluted hands, your wandering feet: all these proclaim you to be Pagans; only with your tongues ye say ye are Christians: ye feed not the hungry, ye clothe not the naked, ye visit not the sick; these are the works, and such like, that will be brought out as witnesses, either with us and for us, or then against us. Be not then deceived, to think that thy naked word will prove thee a Christian, when none of the works of Christ can be seen in thee.

But it seems, many professors are feared for the curse of the Pharisees on whom Christ pronounced a woe, because they did their works to be seen of men; they say they do good, but never man saw it: they have not learned that lesson of St. James, ii. 18, to *shew their faith out of their works*; for whom it were better that they should be afraid lest they be cursed with that fig-tree, which afar off seemed fruitful, but when our Lord came near, and looked into it, longing for some fruit, he found none at all, and therefore cursed it.

It was well observed by Augustine, that a good work, if it be done in sincerity, the more public it be, the more profitable it is: as namely, when alms out of a good heart is given in public; not only is he benefited that gets it, but such as see it are edified thereby. Seeing it is so, that our works must be our witnesses, let us all endeavour to be more abundant in them. To move us hereunto, I conclude this point with this twofold consideration: First, when thy soul shall be sundered from thy body, the good thou hast done in thy body shall never be sundered from thyself, but shall go with thee; *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labour, and their works follow them!* Secondly, when thou art dead in thy body, and sundered from men; yet shalt thou still live in thy works, and have thy memory conserved among men: *therefore, so long as we have time, let us do good.*

BP. COWPER.

Our *foundation* in dealing with God is Christ alone, mere grace and pardon in him. Our *building* is in and by holiness and obedience, as the fruits of that faith by which we have received the atonement. And great mistakes there are in this matter, which bring great entanglements on the souls of men. Some are all their days laying of the foundation, and are never able to build upon it, to any comfort to themselves, or usefulness to others. And the reason is, because they will be mixing, with the foundation, stones that are fit only for the following building. They will be bringing their *obedience, duties, mortification of sin*, and the like, into the foundation. These are precious stones to build with, but unmeet to be first laid, to bear upon them the whole weight of the building. The foundation is to be laid, as was said, in *mere grace*, mercy, pardon in the blood of Christ. This the soul is to accept of, and to rest in, merely as it is grace, without the consideration of any thing in itself, but that it is sinful and obnoxious to ruin. This it finds a difficulty in, and would gladly have something of its own to mix with it : it cannot tell how to fix these foundation stones, without some cement of its own endeavours and duty. And because these things will not mix, they spend a fruitless labor about it all their days. But if the foundation be of grace, it is not at all of works ; for otherwise grace is no *more* grace. If any thing of our own be mixed with grace in this matter, it utterly destroys the nature of grace, which, if it be not alone, is not at all. •

But doth not this tend to licentiousness ? Doth not this render obedience, holiness, duties, mortification of sin, and good works needless ? God forbid ! Yea, this is the only way to order them aright unto the glory of God. Have we nothing to do but to lay the foundation ? Yes, all our days we are to build upon it, when it is surely and firmly laid. And these are the means and ways of our edification. This, then, is the soul to do, who would come to peace and settlement. Let it let go all former endeavours, if it have been engaged in any of that kind. And let it alone receive, admit of, and adhere to mere grace, mercy, and pardon, with a full sense that in itself it hath nothing for which it should have an interest in them, but that all is of mere grace through Jesus Christ :—*Other foundation can no man lay*. Depart not hence until this work be well over. Surcease not an earnest endeavour with your own hearts, to acquiesce in this righteousness of God, and to bring your souls into a comfortable persuasion that God, for Christ's sake, hath freely forgiven you all your sins. Stir not hence until this be effected. If you have been engaged in any other way, that is, to seek for the pardon of sin by some endeavours of your own, it is not unlikely but that you are filled with the fruit of your own doings ; that is, that you go on with all kinds of uncertainties, and without any kind of constant peace. Return, then, again hither. Bring this foundation-work to a blessed issue in the blood of Christ ; and when that is done, up and be doing.

DR. OWEN.

SECTION XIV.—ON ADOPTION.

On Christian Adoption.

WE are by nature the sons of Adam. When God created Adam, he created us ; and as many as are descended from Adam have in themselves the root, out of which they spring. The sons of God we neither are all, nor any one of us, otherwise than only by grace and favor. The sons of God have God's own natural Son, as a *second Adam from heaven*, whose race and progeny they are by spiritual and heavenly birth. God therefore loving eternally his Son, he must needs, eternally in him, have loved and preferred before all others, them

which are spiritually thence descended and sprung out of him. These were in God as in their Saviour, and not as in their Creator only. It was the purpose of his *saving* goodness, his *saving* wisdom, and his *saving* power, which inclined itself towards them. They which thus were in God eternally by their intended admission to life, have, by vocation or adoption, God actually now in them, as the artificer is in the work, which his hand doth presently frame. Life, as all other gifts and benefits, groweth originally from the Father, and cometh not to us but by the Son ; nor by the Son to any of us in particular, but

through the Spirit. For this cause the Apostle wisheth to the church of Corinth, *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost*. Which three St. Peter comprehendeth in one—the *participation of Divine nature*. We are therefore in God, through Christ eternally, according to that intent and purpose, whereby we are chosen to be made his in this present world, before the world itself was made: we are in God, through the knowledge which is had of us, and the love which is borne towards us from everlasting. But in God we actually are no longer than only from the time of our actual adoption into the body of his true church, into the fellowship of his children. For his church he knoweth and loveth; so that they which are in the church, are thereby known to be in him. Our being in Christ by eternal foreknowledge saveth us not, without our actual and real adoption into the fellowship of his saints in this present world. For in him we actually are by our actual incorporation into that society which hath him for their Head; and doth make together with him one body, (he and they in that respect having one name) for which cause by virtue of this mystical conjunction, *we are of him, and in him*, even as though our very flesh and bones should be made continue with his. We are in Christ, because he knoweth and loveth us, even as parts of himself. No man actually is in him, but they in whom he actually is. For *he which hath not the Son of God, hath not life. I am the Vine, and ye are the branches: he which abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*: but the branch, severed from the vine, withereth. We are therefore adopted sons of God to eternal life, by participation of the only-begotten Son of God, whose life is the well-spring and cause of ours. It is too cold an interpretation, whereby some men expound our being in Christ to import nothing else, but only, that the self-same nature which maketh us to be men, is in him, and maketh him man as we are. For what man in the world is there, which hath not so far forth communion with Jesus Christ? It is not this that can sustain the weight of such sentences as speak of the mystery of our coherence with Jesus Christ. The church is in Christ, as Eve was in Adam. Yea, by grace we are every of us in Christ, and in his church, as by nature

we were in those our first parents. God made Eve of the rib of Adam: and his church he frameth out of the very flesh, the very wounded and bleeding side of the Son of man. His body crucified and his blood shed for the life of the world, are the true elements of that heavenly Being, which maketh us such as himself is of whom we come. For which cause the words of Adam may be fitly the words of Christ concerning his church, *flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bones*; a true nature extracted out of my own body. So that in him, even according to his manhood, we, according to our heavenly being, are as branches in that Root out of which they grow. To all things he is life, and to men light, *as the Son of God*; to the church, both life and light eternal, by being made the Son of man for us, and by being in us a Saviour, whether we respect him as God, or as man. Adam is in us as an original cause of our nature, and of that corruption of nature which causeth death; Christ as the cause original of restoration to life. The person of Adam is not in us, but his nature, and the corruption of his nature derived into all men by propagation; Christ having Adam's nature, as we have, but incorrupt, deriveth not nature but incorruption, and that immediately from his own person, into all that belong unto him. As therefore we are really partakers of the *body of sin and death* received from Adam; so except we be truly partakers of Christ, and as really possessed of his Spirit, all we speak of eternal life is but a dream. That which quickeneth us is the Spirit of the second Adam, and his flesh that wherewith he quickeneth. That which in him made our nature uncorrupt, was the union of his deity with our nature. And in that respect the sentence of death and condemnation, which only taketh hold upon sinful flesh, could no way possibly extend unto him. This caused his voluntary death for others to prevail with God, and to have the force of an expiatory Sacrifice. *The blood of Christ*, as the Apostle witnesseth, *doth therefore take away sin*, because, *through the Eternal Spirit, he offered himself unto God without spot*. That which sanctified our nature in Christ, that which made it a sacrifice available to take away sin, is the same which quickeneth it, raised it out of the grave after death, and exalted it unto glory. Seeing therefore that Christ is in us as a *quickenings Spirit*,

the first degree of communion with Christ must needs consist in the participation of his Spirit, which Cyprian in that respect well termeth *germanissimam societatem*, the highest and truest society that can be between man and him, which is both God and man in one. These things, St. Cyril duly considering, reproveth their speeches, which taught that only the deity of Christ is the Vine whereupon we by faith do depend as branches, and that neither his flesh nor our bodies are comprised in this resemblance. For doth any man doubt, but that even from the flesh of Christ our very bodies do receive that life which shall make them glorious at the latter day; and for which they are already accounted parts of his blessed body? Our corruptible bodies could never live the life they shall live, were it not that here they are joined with his body, which is incorruptible, and that his is in ours as a cause of immortality; a cause by removing through the death and merit of his own flesh that which hindered the life of ours. Christ is therefore, both as God and as man, that true Vine whereof we both spiritually and corporally are branches. The mixture of his bodily substance with ours is a thing which the ancient fathers disclaim. Yet the mixture of his flesh with ours they speak of, to signify what our very bodies, through mystical conjunction, receive from that vital efficacy which we know to be in his; and from bodily mixtures they borrow divers similitudes, rather to declare the truth than the manner of coherence between his sacred and the sanctified bodies of saints. Thus much no Christian man will deny, that when Christ sanctified his own flesh, giving as God, and taking as man the Holy Ghost, he did not this for himself only, but for our sakes, that the grace of sanctification and life, which was first received in him, might pass from him to his whole race, as malediction came from Adam unto all mankind. Howbeit, because the work of his Spirit to those effects is in us prevented by sin and death possessing us before; it is of necessity, that as well our present sanctification unto newness of life, as the future restoration of our bodies, should presuppose a participation of the grace, efficacy, merit, or virtue of his body and blood; without which foundation first laid, there is no place for those other operations of the Spirit of Christ to ensue. So that Christ imparteth plainly himself by de-

grees. It pleaseth him in mercy to account himself incomplete and maimed without us. But most assured we are, that we all receive of his fulness, because he is in us as a moving and working cause; from which, many blessed effects are really found to ensue, and that in sundry, both kinds and degrees, all tending to eternal happiness. It must be confessed, that of Christ, working as a Creator, and a Governor of the world by providence, all are partakers; not all partakers of that grace, whereby he inhabiteth whom he saveth. Again, as he dwelleth not by grace in all, so neither doth he equally work in all them in whom he dwelleth. 'Whence is it,' saith St. Augustine, 'that some be holier than others are, but because God doth dwell in some more plentifully than in others?' And because the divine substance of Christ is equally in all, his human substance equally distant from all; it appeareth that the participation of Christ, wherein there are many degrees and differences, must needs consist in such effects, as being derived from both natures of Christ really into us, are made our own; and we by having them in us, are truly said to have him from whom they come; Christ also more or less, to inhabit and impart himself, as the graces are fewer or more, greater or smaller, which really flow into us from Christ. Christ is whole with the whole church, and whole with every part of the church, as touching his Person, which can no way divide itself, or be possessed by degrees and portions. But the participation of Christ importeth, besides the presence of Christ's Person, and besides the mystical copulation thereof, with the parts and members of his whole church, a true actual influence of grace whereby the life which we live according to godliness, is his; and from him we receive those perfections wherein our eternal happiness consisteth. Thus we participate Christ, partly by imputation; as when those things which he did, and suffered for us, are imputed unto us for righteousness: partly by habitual and real infusion, as when grace is inwardly bestowed while we are on earth, and* afterwards more fully, both our souls and bodies made like unto his in glory. The first thing of his so infused into our hearts in this life, is the Spirit of Christ; whereupon, because the rest, of what kind soever, do all both necessarily depend and infallibly also ensue; there-

fore the Apostles term it, sometimes the seed of God, sometimes the pledge of our heavenly inheritance, sometimes the hansom or earnest of that which is to come. From whence it is, that they which belong to the mystical body of our Saviour Christ, and be in number as the stars of heaven, divided successively, by reason of their mortal condition, into many generations, are notwithstanding coupled every one to Christ their Head, and all unto every particular person amongst themselves, inasmuch as the same Spirit, which anointed the blessed soul of our Saviour Christ, doth so formalise, unite and actuate his whole race, as if both he and they were so many limbs compacted into one body, by being quickened all with one and the same soul. That wherein we are partakers of Jesus Christ by imputation, agreeth equally unto all that have it. For it consisteth in such acts and deeds of his, as could not have longer continuance, than while they were in doing, nor at that very time belong unto any other, but to him from whom they come; and therefore how men, either then, or before, or since, should be made partakers of them, there can be no way imagined, but only by imputation. Again, a deed must either not be imputed to any, but rest altogether in him, whose it is; or if at all it be imputed, they which have it by imputation, must have it such as it is, whole. So that degrees being neither in the personal presence of Christ, nor in the participation of those effects which are ours by imputation only; it resteth, that we wholly apply them to the participation of Christ's infused grace; although, even in this kind also, the first beginning of life, the seed of God, the first-fruits of Christ's Spirit, be without latitude. For we have hereby only the being of the sons of God, in which number how far soever one may seem to excel another, yet touching this that all are sons, they are all equals, some happily better sons than the rest are, but none any more a son than another. Thus therefore we see, how the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; how they both are in all things, and all things in them; what communion Christ hath with his church, how his church and every member thereof, is in him by original derivation, and he personally in them, by way of mystical association, wrought through the gift of the Holy Ghost, which they that are his receive from him, and

together with the same, what benefit soever the vital force of his body and blood may yield; yea, by steps and degrees they receive the complete measure of all such divine grace as doth sanctify and save throughout, till the day of their final exaltation to a state of fellowship in glory with him, whose partakers they are now in those things that tend to glory.

HOOKE.

The believer is adopted into the family of God, and admitted to all the honor and felicity of his beloved children. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!* 1 John iii. 1. *According as he hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace,* Eph. i. 3-14. He therefore thus addresses us by his word, *Come out from among them, and be separate; and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty,* 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. This call being accompanied by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, our minds are influenced to obey it: thus we are brought to repentance, and faith in Christ, our sins are pardoned, and we pass from the family and kingdom of the wicked one into the household of God, by a gracious *adoption*. This term was borrowed from the custom of the ancients, who frequently took the children of other persons, and by a solemn legal process received them into their own families, gave them their names, educated them as their own, and left them their estates. Thus regeneration communicates a divine nature, and makes us the children of God; and adoption recognises us as such, and admits us to the enjoyment of the privileges belonging to that relation, and so pardoned rebels become the children and heirs of the Almighty and Everlasting God, *by faith in Jesus Christ,* Gal. iii. 26. But what words can express the value of this distinguished privilege? The adoption of the meanest beggar, or the vilest traitor, into the family of the greatest monarch, to be the heir of all his dignities, would produce but a trivial alteration in his circumstances: for vexation,

sickness, and death would still await him; and the distance between the mightiest and the most abject of men, or creatures, is as nothing compared with that which subsists between the great Creator and all the works of his hands, Isa. xl. 13-26. This adoption is not a mere name; it is a substantial good, an honor, a dignity, and an advantage which eclipses, and, as it were, swallows up all other benefits which can be obtained by any creature. *If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ:* and we may be sure that every thing, which can prepare us for our incorruptible and eternal inheritance, and put us in possession of it, will be conferred by the love and bounty of our Almighty Friend and Father. *But we know not what we shall be:—Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* Lest, however, we should imagine that any possible honor, advantage, or felicity was excepted, when the inheritance of the children of God was mentioned; he has been pleased to expand our views and enlarge our expectations, by language taken from all the other most endeared relations of life. The obedient disciples of Christ are *his brethren, his sisters, and his mother*; yea, their *Maker is their Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name!* Isa. liv. 5. Matt. xii. 46-50. Eph. v. 25-27.

They who are thus adopted into the family of God receive *the Spirit of adoption*, instead of the *Spirit of bondage*, and are encouraged to say, *Abba, Father!* or to address him as their Father, whatever language they speak, or to whatever country they belong. We must understand this expression merely as denoting a confidence that God is our Father: for believers are often actuated by *the Spirit of adoption*, when harassed with doubts whether they be the children of God or not; and many have an overbearing confidence of their adoption, while their actions demonstrate that they belong to another family. John viii. 41-47. The Spirit of adoption indeed as properly belongs to the believer's temper and character, as to his privileges; yet it is necessary here to observe in general, that the Holy Spirit, by producing in us that disposition towards God which a dutiful son bears towards a wise and good father, manifests our regeneration and

adoption, and *bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children and heirs of God:* and, while we feel our minds habitually influenced to seek him in all our difficulties; to revere him, trust, love, and obey him; to seek his glory, and rejoice in the success of the Gospel and the prosperity of his people; we have *a witness in ourselves* that we are born of God, and adopted into his family; even though weakness of faith, misapprehension, or temptation, should create a hesitation in our minds, whilst addressing him as our Father. This privilege, therefore, consists in the liberty of approaching the Lord at all times and for all things; of entrusting all our concerns in his hands, and of considering them all as managed by him, in perfect wisdom, truth, and love, for our present and everlasting good. Indeed the very disposition, produced by the Spirit of adoption, is our privilege, and constitutes the *seal*, the *first-fruits*, and the *earnest* of our felicity. Rom. viii. 14-17. Gal. iv. 6, 7. 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. Eph. i. 13.

REV. THOS. SCOTT.

That spiritual and divine adoption, about which we treat, is *God's gracious admission of strangers and aliens into the state, relation, and enjoyment of all the privileges of children, through Jesus Christ*; according to that glorious promise of the new Covenant, *I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*, 2 Cor. vi. 18. Reconciliation, justification, and adoption, may be thus distinguished. In *reconciliation*, God is considered as the sovereign Lord, and the injured party, and the sinner as an enemy to him. In *justification*, our Maker sustains the character of the Supreme Judge, and man is considered as a guilty criminal standing before his tribunal. In *adoption*, the Source of all mercies appears as a Father, and the apostate sons of Adam as aliens from him; as belonging to the family of Satan, and denominated *children of wrath*. In reconciliation we are made *friends*, in justification we are pronounced *righteous*, and in adoption we are constituted *heirs*, and have a declared right to the eternal inheritance.

That believers are the children of God, the Scriptures expressly declare. They may be so called, as they are *begotten*

and *born* from above; as they stand in a *marriage-relation* to Christ, and as they are *adopted* into the heavenly family. These different ways in which the Scripture speaks of their filial relation to God, are intended to aid our feeble conceptions when we think upon the grand ineffable blessing; one mode of expression supplying, in some degree, the ideas that are wanting in another. To express the original of spiritual life, and the restoration of the divine image, we are said to be *born of God*. To set forth, in the liveliest manner, our most intimate and delightful union with the Son of the Highest, we are said to be *married* to Christ. That we might never forget the misery of our natural condition, as a state of alienation from God, and at the same time to intimate to us our title to the heavenly patrimony, we are said to be *adopted* by him. The condition, therefore, of all believers, is most noble and excellent. Their high *birth*, their divine Husband, and everlasting inheritance, loudly proclaim it. The beloved Apostle was so amazed at the love of God, manifested in the privilege of adoption, that he could not forbear crying out, with astonishment and rapture, *Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called THE SONS OF GOD!*—Here grace reigns. The vessels of mercy were predestinated to the enjoyment of this honor and happiness before the world began. The great Lord of all chose them for himself, chose them for his children, that they might be *heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ*. This he did, not because of any worthiness in them, but of his own sovereign will. As it is written, *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace*, Eph. i. 5, 6. *According to the good pleasure of his will*; this is the eternal source of the heavenly blessing. *By Jesus Christ*; this is the way of its communication to the sinner. *To the praise of his glorious grace*; this is the end of bestowing it.

The persons adopted are sinners of Adam's race; such who, considered in their natural state, are estranged from God, and guilty before him, under sentence of death, and obnoxious to ruin. Their translation, therefore, out of this deplorable condition, into a state and relation

so glorious, is an instance of reigning, triumphant, boundless grace. That the children of wrath should become the inheritors of glory, and the slaves of the devil be acknowledged as the sons of Jehovah; that the enemies of God should ever be adopted into his family, and have an infeasible right to all the privileges of his children; are astonishing to the last degree.

ABRAHAM BOOTH.

The Abundance of Grace.

THE Apostle says not grace, but *abundance of grace*. For we receive, not barely what may suffice to obtain our pardon, but incomparably more. We are delivered from all punishment, and from every evil. We are justified, we are sanctified, made the children of God, and the brethren of his only-begotten Son. We are constituted heirs, joint heirs with the Prince of heaven. Yea, we become the members of his body; most intimately and indissolubly united to that Divine Head.

All these privileges St. Paul styles *the abundance of grace*: intimating that the antidote is not only qualified to counteract and expel the poison, but is sovereign also to establish health, to create beauty, to impart honor, and from the most malignant of all evils to produce the most distinguished blessings: any one of which, separately considered, would have been sufficient to overcome and disarm death: but, under their *combined* influence, it is absolutely destroyed, it vanishes entirely away, and leaves not so much as a trace of mischief, or a shadow of terror.

Let us suppose some poor debtor owing a considerable sum, and, for want of payment, cast into prison. A generous friend, pitying his condition, discharges the whole debt, and releases him from confinement: and not this only, but bestows on him splendid apparel, with thousands of silver and gold; introduces him to court, and recommends him to the royal favor; procures his advancement to the highest honors, and puts him in possession of the grandest preferments. Where now is the disgrace of his imprisonment? and where are the distresses of his insolvent state?

Such is the case with regard to us sinners, and our most gracious Redeemer. He has paid inconceivably more than we either did or could possibly owe. Being God, the true God, the infinite and eternal God, his payment exceeds our debt, as

much as the waters of the great deep exceed the small drop of a bucket. Doubt not, therefore, poor sinner, that fliest for refuge to this all-glorious Saviour; doubt not but thy sins, though more virulent than all plagues, are done away; and death, though he be the king of terrors, is abolished; this abolished, and those done away, before *such* grace and merit; even as a spark of fire is extinguished when plunged into the abyss of the sea.

REV. J. HERVEY.

The Immensity of God's Pardoning Love.

FORGIVENESS that is with God, is such as becomes him; such as is suitable to his greatness, goodness, and all other excellencies of his nature; such as that therein he will be known to be God. What he says concerning some of the works of his providence, *Be still, and know that I am God*, may be much more said concerning this great effect of his grace; 'Still your souls, and know that he is God.' It is not like that narrow, difficult, halving, and manacled forgiveness that is found amongst men, when any such thing is found amongst them; but it is full, free, boundless, bottomless, absolute, such as becomes his nature and excellencies. It is, in a word, forgiveness that is with God, and by the exercise whereof he will be known so to be. . . .

For the most part, when we come to deal with God about forgiveness, we hang in every briar of disputing, quarrelsome unbelief. This or that circumstance of aggravation, this or that unparalleled particular, bereave us of our confidence. Want of a due consideration of him with whom we have to do, measuring him by that line of our own imagination, bringing him down unto our thoughts and our ways, is the cause of all our disquietments. Because we find it hard to forgive our pence, we think he cannot forgive talents. But he hath provided to obviate such thoughts in us, *I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man.* Hos. xi. 9. Our satisfaction in this matter is to be taken from his nature. Were he a man or as the sons of men, it were impossible that upon such and so many provocations, he should turn away from the fierceness of his anger. But he is God. This gives an infiniteness and an incon-

ceivable boundlessness to the forgiveness that is with him, and exalts it above all our thoughts and ways. . . .

God engageth his infinite excellencies to demonstrate the greatness and boundlessness of his forgiveness. He proposeth them unto our considerations, to convince us that we shall find pardon with him suitable and answerable unto them. See Isa. xl. 27-31; *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not be faint.* The matter in question is, whether acceptance with God, which is only by forgiveness, is to be obtained or not? This sinful Jacob either despairs of, or at least desponds about it. But saith God, *My thoughts are not your thoughts* in this matter. And what course doth he take to convince them of their mistake therein? What argument doth he make use of to free them from their unbelief, and to rebuke their fears? Plainly he calls them to the consideration of Himself, both who and what he is with whom they had to do; that they might expect acceptance and forgiveness, such as did become him. Minding them of his power, his immensity, his infinite wisdom, his unchangeableness, all the excellencies and properties of his nature, he demands of them, whether they have not just ground to expect forgiveness and grace above all their thoughts and apprehensions, because answering the infinite largeness of his heart, from whence it doth proceed. And Moses manageth this plea for the forgiveness of that people under a high provocation, and a most severe threatening of their destruction therein, Numb. xiv. 17, 18. He pleads for pardon in such a way and manner as may answer the great and glorious properties of the nature of God, and which would manifest an infiniteness of power and all-sufficiency to be

in him. . . . Now this is like Himself, such as becomes him, that answers the infinite perfections of his nature, that is exercised and given forth by him as God. But we are apt to narrow and straiten it by our unbelief, and to render it unbecoming of him. He less dishonours God, (or as little) who being wholly under the power of the law, believes that there is no forgiveness with him, none to be obtained from him; or doth not believe it, that so it is, or is so to be obtained; for which he hath the voice and sentence of the law to countenance him; than those who, being convinced of the principles and grounds of it before mentioned, and of the truth of the testimony given unto it, do yet, by straitening and narrowing of it, render it unworthy of him whose excellencies are all infinite, and whose ways on that account are incomprehensible. If then we resolve to treat with God about this matter, let us do it as it becomes his greatness, that is, indeed,

as the wants of our souls do require: let us not entangle our own spirits by limiting his grace. . . .

If there be any pardon with God, it is such as becomes him to give. When he pardons, he will abundantly pardon. Go with your half-forgiveness, limited, conditional pardons, with reserves and limitations, unto the sons of men; it may be, it may become them, it is like themselves; that of God is absolute and perfect, before which our sins are as a cloud before the east wind and the rising sun. Hence he is said to do this work with his whole heart and his whole soul; freely, bountifully, largely to indulge and forgive unto us our sins, and to "cast them into the bottom of the sea," into a bottomless ocean, an emblem of infinite mercy. Mic. vii. 19. Remember this, poor souls, when you are to deal with God in this matter,—all things are possible unto them that believe.

DR. OWEN.

SECTION XV.—ON SANCTIFICATION.

Necessity of Sanctification.

GOD, who is absolute goodness, cannot love any of his creatures and take pleasure in them, without bestowing a communication of his goodness and likeness upon them. God cannot make a Gospel to promise men life and happiness hereafter without being regenerated, and made partakers of his holiness. As soon may heaven and hell be reconciled together, and lovingly shake hands with one another, as God can be fondly indulgent to any sin, in whomsoever it be. As soon may light and darkness be espoused together, and midnight be married to the noon-day, as God can be joined in a league of friendship to any wicked soul.

The great design of God in the Gospel is, to clear up this mist of sin and corruption which we are here surrounded with, and to bring up his creatures out of the *shadow of death* to the region of light above, the land of truth and holiness. The great mystery of the Gospel is to establish a godlike frame and disposition of spirit, which consists in righteousness and true holiness, in the hearts of men. And Christ, who is the great and mighty Saviour, came on purpose into the world,

not only to save us from *fire and brimstone*, but also to save us from our *sins*. Christ hath therefore made an expiation of our sins by his death upon the cross, that we being thus *delivered out of the hands* of these our greatest enemies, might *serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life*. This *grace of God that bringeth salvation* hath therefore appeared unto all men, in the Gospel, that it might *teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. These things I write unto you, (saith our Apostle a little before my text) *that you sin not*: therein expressing the end of the whole Gospel, which is, not only to cover sin, by spreading the purple robe of Christ's death and sufferings over it, whilst it still remaineth in us with all its filth and noisomeness unremoved; but also to convey a powerful and mighty spirit of holiness, to *cleanse* us and *free* us from it. And

this is a greater grace of God to us than the former, which still go both together in the Gospel; besides the free remission and pardon of sin in the *blood of Christ*, the delivering of us from the power of sin by the *Spirit of Christ* dwelling in our hearts.

Christ came not into the world only to cast a mantle over us, and hide all our filthy sores from God's avenging eye with his merits and righteousness; but he came likewise to be a Chirurgeon and Physician of souls, to free us from the filth and corruption of them; which is more grievous and burdensome, more noisome to a true Christian, than the guilt of sin itself.

Should a poor wretched and diseased creature, that is full of sores and ulcers, be covered all over with purple, or clothed with scarlet, he would take but little contentment in it whilst his sores and wounds remain upon him: and he had much rather be arrayed in rags, so he might obtain but soundness and health within. The Gospel is a true Bethesda, a pool of grace, where such poor, lame, and infirm creatures as we are, upon the moving of God's Spirit in it, may descend down, not only to wash our skin and outside, but also to be cured of our diseases within. And whatever the world thinks, there is a powerful Spirit that *moves* upon these *waters*, the waters of the Gospel, spreading its gentle, healing, quickening wings over our souls. The Gospel is not like Abana and Pharpar, those common rivers of Damascus, that could only cleanse the outside; but is a true Jordan, in which such leprous Naamans, as we all are, may *wash and be clean*. *Blessed indeed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin*: but yet rather blessed are they whose sins are like a *morning cloud*, and quite taken away from them. *Blessed, thrice blessed, are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied: blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

CUDWORTH.

Sanctification the End of the Divine Counsels in Redemption.

THE Sanctification of believers, whence of all their holiness is derived, was the end of the Divine counsels in Redemption. Our minds are impressed with reverential awe,

whilst our thoughts are carried back to the original source of all their spiritual blessings,—the everlasting love of God towards them in Jesus Christ. This love is free, and unmerited; it was not fixed upon them from a respect to that purity and excellence, which it was foreseen they would possess; but rather, it determined upon the means, by which they should in due season be brought to that state. However deep and mysterious this matter be, yet such is the order of things, as described in the sacred oracles. *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: according as he hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY, and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will*, Rom. viii. 30. Eph. i. 4, 5. Nothing therefore can be more preposterous, than for persons to presume upon their election, who give no diligence *to make their calling sure*, or to boast of their calling, while negligent of good works and destitute of internal purity. But let these doctrines be properly arranged, and sanctification will be allowed to have a close and necessary connexion with God's sovereign and righteous purposes of bringing his people to everlasting glory.

It was one part of the design of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice. We say not how many important objects were intended to be answered by his death, but it was surely not the least considerable to obtain grace for all who should believe in him, to rescue them from the dominion and the love of sin, to cleanse them from its defilement, and to subdue them to a state of holy obedience and cheerful subjection to himself. Such is the account of his Apostle: *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works:—wherefore, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, he suffered without the gate*, Titus ii. 14. Heb. xiii. 12. Such also is his own declaration: *For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.—Lo, I come to do thy will, O God:—by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*, John xvii. 19. Heb. x. 9, 10. The graces of the Holy Spirit are imparted

to us only in consequence of this oblation ; and therefore after the Saviour had been *delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification,—when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men ; yea, to the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them*, Rom. iv. 25. Eph. iv. 8. Ps. lxxviii. 18. Shall we then contend for the atonement, and shew no desire that it may produce its intended efficacy upon our minds, in *purging our conscience from dead works, that we may serve the living God* ? Heb. ix. 14. Shall we derive hope and consolation from the cross, and not learn from it to abominate sin, and to seek for that influence by which alone we can be renewed in holiness ? And without holiness, how will it appear that we are partakers of redemption ?

It is the great object, for which the Spirit's influence is exerted in the minds of believers. His operations are various ; he communicates to them in different degrees light, and strength, and comfort ; but whatever is in them of real excellency *he worketh all in all*, 1 Cor. xii. 6. By him they are guided into all truth, and cheered with the hope of their adoption : but his chief work, and that to which the other parts of his office are subservient, is the gradual transformation of their souls into the divine image. Thus they are *changed from glory to glory*, from one degree of grace to another ; they *mortify the deeds of the body*, and produce that fruit, which is *in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Rom. viii. 13. Eph. v. 9. *The Sanctification of the Spirit*, as if the term comprised the whole of his influence, is that, through which *the elect of God* are conducted *unto obedience* here, and hereafter *to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*, 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. 1 Pet. i. 2. Should this therefore be lightly esteemed by any of those especially who profess to have received *the Spirit of wisdom*, and to *abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost* ? How forcible and how pertinent is the exhortation, *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit* ! Gal. v. 25. There is no other way of manifesting the divine life in our souls, produced by his agency, than by our continued progress and steadfast perseverance in holiness even to the end.

It is the chief excellence and glory of

the redeemed of the Lord. Much is done for them in various ways, and very exalted are their privileges. But all is little, compared to this, that they are *conformed to the image of Christ*. They are *called to be saints*, Rom. i. 7 ; that is, to be sanctified or made holy persons : it is the end, for which they are brought to the knowledge of Christ ; and it is the highest honour which he bestows upon them. This is the peculiar distinction, which the Psalmist celebrates as adorning the spouse of the heavenly Bridegroom, *the King's daughter is all glorious within*, Ps. xlv. 13. And it is the same spiritual beauty, which when perfected will shine with so much splendor in the bright world above, and excite the admiration of men and angels : for he will *present to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,—holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight*, Eph. v. 27. Col. i. 22. *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*, and praises shall for ever ascend unto Him *who hath made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, Matt. xiii. 43. Col. i. 12. Should not this work engage our highest estimation ? Let us admire whatever fruits or evidences of it we perceive in others, and hope and long and pray for its completion in ourselves.

REV. T. ROBINSON.

Nature of Sanctification.

SANCTIFICATION is the renewing of our nature according to the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, which is but begun in this life, and is called Sanctification, and perfected in the life to come, which therefore is most strictly called *glory*.

How far forth is our nature renewed in this life by Sanctification ?

This renewing is of our whole nature, 1 Thess. v. 23 ; Rom. xii. 2 ; the understanding being enlightened, the will rectified, the affections regulated, the outward man reformed. But not wholly in this life ; and this is done by the powerful operation of the Spirit of God, who *having begun a good work in us, will perfect it unto the day of the Lord*, John xiii. 6. Ps. li. 10. Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

What be the parts of our sanctification ?

Two, answerable to the two powerful means whereby they are wrought ; first,

mortification, or dying unto sin, and thereby freedom from the dominion thereof by the death of Christ, Rom. vi. 6, 7.

Secondly, vivification, or quickening unto newness of life, by the power of the resurrection of Christ.

How doth Sanctification differ from the former grace of Justification?

In many main and material differences ; as,

First, in the order, not of time, wherein they go together, Rom. viii. 30, nor of knowledge and apprehension, wherein this latter hath precedency, 1 Cor. vi. 11, but of nature, wherein the former is the ground of this latter, 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Secondly, in the subject : the righteousness whereby we are justified being inherent in Christ for us ; but this of sanctification in ourselves from him, Rom. viii. 10.

Thirdly, in the cause : our justification following from the merit ; our sanctification from the efficacy of the death and life of Christ, Eph. i. 19. ii. 1.

Fourthly, in the instrument : faith, which in justification is only as an hand receiving, in sanctification is a co-working virtue, Acts xv. 19. Gal. v. 6.

Fifthly, in the measure : justification being in all believers, and at all times alike ; but sanctification wrought differently and by degrees, 2 Cor. iii. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

Sixthly, in the end ; which being in both *eternal life*, Rom. vi. 23, 24 ; yet the one is among the causes of reigning, the other only as the highway unto the kingdom.

ABP. USHER.

From what hath hitherto been discoursed, I hope the difference between both covenants clearly appears, and that the Gospel was not brought in only to hold forth a new platform and model of religion ; it was not brought in only to refine some notions of truth, that might formerly seem discoloured and disfigured by a multitude of legal rites and ceremonies ; it was not to cast our opinions concerning the way of life and happiness only into a new mould and shape in a pedagogical kind of way : it is not so much a system and body of saving divinity, but the spirit and vital influx of it spreading itself over all the powers of men's souls, and quickening them into a divine life : it is not so properly a doctrine that is wrapt

up in ink and paper, as it is *vitalis scientia*, a living impression made upon the soul and spirit. We may in a true sense be as legal as ever the Jews were, if we converse with the gospel as a thing only without us ; and be as far short of the righteousness of God as they were, if we make the righteousness which is of Christ by faith to serve us only as an outward covering, and endeavour not after an internal transformation of our minds and souls into it. The Gospel does not so much consist *in verbis* as *in virtute* : neither doth the evangelical dispensation therefore please God so much more than the legal did, because, as a finer contrivance of his infinite understanding, it more clearly discovers the way of salvation to the minds of men ; but chiefly because it is a more powerful efflux of his divine goodness upon them, as being the true seed of a happy immortality continually thriving and growing on to perfection. I shall add further, the Gospel does not therefore hold forth such a transcendent privilege and advantage above what the law did, only because it acquaints us that Christ our true high priest is ascended up into the holy of holies, and there, instead of the blood of bulls and goats, hath sprinkled the ark and mercy-seat above with his own blood : but also because it conveys that blood of sprinkling into our defiled consciences, to purge them from dead works. Far be it from me to disparage in the least the merit of Christ's blood, his becoming obedient unto death, whereby we are justified. But I doubt sometimes some of our dogmata and notions about justification may puff us up in far higher and goodlier conceits of ourselves than God hath of us ; and that we profanely make the unspotted righteousness of Christ to serve only as a covering wherein to wrap up our foul deformities and filthy vices ; and when we have done, think ourselves in as good credit and repute with God as we are with ourselves, and that we are become heaven's darlings as much as we are our own. I doubt not but the merit and obedience of our Saviour gain us favour with God, and potently move down the benign influences of heaven upon us : but yet I think we may sometimes be too lavish and wanton in our imaginations, in fondly conceiting a greater change in the esteem which God hath of us than becomes us, and too little

reckon upon the real and vital emanations of his favour upon us.

REV. J. SMITH.

A man may be sanctified, and yet be but almost a Christian. Every kind of Sanctification doth not make a man a new creature; for many are sanctified that are never renewed. You read of them that *count the blood of the covenant, wherewith they are sanctified, an unholy thing*. . . .

There is a twofold work of Sanctification spoken of in Scripture.

The one, common and ineffectual.

The other, special and effectual.

The work of Sanctification which is true and effectual, is a working of the Spirit of God in the soul, enabling it to the mortifying of all sin, to the obeying of every command, *to walking with God in all well-pleasing*.

Now, whoever is thus sanctified, is one with him that sanctifieth. Christ will not be ashamed to call such brethren; for they are *flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone*.

But then there is a more common work of Sanctification, which is ineffectual as to the two great works of dying to sin, and living to God. This kind of Sanctification may help to restrain sin, but not to mortify sin; it may lop off the boughs, but it layeth not the axe to the root of the tree; it sweeps and garnishes the room with common virtues, but doth not adorn it with saving graces; so that a man is but almost a Christian, notwithstanding this Sanctification.

Or thus, there is an inward and outward Sanctification.

Inward Sanctification is that which deals with the soul and its faculties, understanding, conscience, will, memory, and affections. Outward Sanctification is that which deals with the life and conversation. Both these must concur to make a man a Christian indeed: therefore, the Apostle puts them together in his prayer for the Thessalonians. *The God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*. A man is then sanctified wholly, when he is sanctified both inwardly and outwardly—both in heart and affections, and in life and conversation. Outward Sanctification is not enough without inward, nor inward without outward:

we must have both *clean hands and a pure heart*. The heart must be pure, that we may not incur blame from within; and the hands must be clean, that we may not incur shame from without. We must have hearts *sprinkled from an evil conscience, and bodies washed with pure water*. *We must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*. Inward purity is the most excellent, but without the outward, it is not sufficient; the true Christian is made up of both.

MATTHEW MEADE.

Sanctification is the work alone of Divine Grace.

THE nature of this work, that wherein the very being of this purifying consists, is, *the receiving, or obeying of this truth*. So Gal. iii. 1, where it is put for right believing. The chief point of obedience is believing; the proper obedience to truth is, to give credit to it; and this divine belief doth necessarily bring the whole soul into obedience and conformity to that pure truth which is in the word; and so the very purifying and renewing of the soul is this obedience of faith, as unbelief is its chief impurity and disobedience; therefore, Acts xv. 9, Faith is said to *purify the heart*.

The chief worker of this Sanctification, is, *the Holy Spirit of God*. They are said here to *purify themselves*, for it is certain and undeniable, that the soul itself doth act in believing or obeying the truth; but not of itself, it is not the first principle of motion. They purify their souls, but it is *by the Spirit*. They do it by His enlivening power, and a purifying virtue received from Him. Faith, or obeying the truth, works this purity, but the Holy Ghost works that faith: as in the forecited place, God is said to *purify their hearts by Faith*, ver. 9. He doth that by giving them the Holy Ghost. The truth is pure, and purifying, yet can it not of itself purify the soul, but by the obeying or believing of it; and the soul cannot obey or believe but by the Spirit which works in it that faith, and by that faith purifies it, and works love in it.

LEIGHTON.

Without the communion of Jesus Christ, there is no sanctification. St. Peter teaches us, that it is owing to the

sanctification of the Spirit, that we are brought *unto obedience* of the faith, and *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. i. 2. If, to be cleansed, we must be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit; let us not presume that, before this divine sprinkling, we are different from other sinners who are not in communion with Jesus. To obtain and enjoy salvation, we ought neither to be wise in our own conceit, nor to have any will of our own; but to follow the Lord step by step, and never to lose sight of him.

That great change, which St. Paul calls being *renewed in the spirit of our mind*, Eph. iv. 23, was unknown to philosophers, though it is the first entrance into life. They teach that reason alone must have the sovereign power over man; they imagine that we ought to listen to its dictates, and blindly follow its light; and that for this purpose we should resign the government of life to it. The doctrine of Christ, on the contrary, requires that reason should submit, that it should retire and give place to the Holy Spirit, and be humbled and subdued under his discipline; in order that man may no longer live, but that Jesus Christ may live and reign uncontrolled in his heart. CALVIN.

That work of God which produces our sanctification, is performed by a real supernatural and most powerful efficacy, reaching to the full effect, as we have already intimated, when treating on effectual calling and regeneration. *For we are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works*, Eph. ii. 10. By the very same power, which was displayed and exerted in the work of the old creation, he forms his own people to good works, or, which is the same thing, he sanctifies them. *He gives an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear*, Deut. xxix. 4. *He puts his Spirit within them, and causes them to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments*, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *He gives them one heart and one way, that they may fear him for ever*, Jer. xxxii. 39. And certainly none is fit to form again the image of God in man, but he who at first made man after his own image; the one being a work of no less power and excellence than the other. . .

Nature itself and man's conscience teach him these two things: 1st. Our inability

for virtue. 2dly. The all-sufficiency of God, whereby he is the fountain and the author of all true good. Of the former Epictetus apud Arrianum, lib. 2. c. 11. says, "The beginning of philosophy to those who enter into it by the gate as they ought, is a sense of their own impotence and inability." Of the latter, Maximus Tyrius, Dissert. 22. "We are not to imagine, that any good can befall men but what comes from God: as there is no good to men which derives not its original from God."

From those generals, the heathen themselves have proved these more particular propositions: 1st. That to the acquisition and practice of virtue, men stand in need of divine assistance and grace. Hierocles, a Pythagorean philosopher, has excellently taught this in these words: 'We are not so much as to preconceive, that virtuous actions are so in our power as to be performed without divine aid: we stand in need of the assistance of God, both for escaping evil and acquiring good.' 2dly. That from a sense of our own impotence, we are to ask it of God, Epictet. apud Arrianum, lib. 2. c. 18. 'Noble is the struggle, and divine the enterprise, the subject a kingdom, liberty, happiness, calm of mind unruffled by passions. Are all concerned? therefore remember God, call him in for thy assistant, thy associate.' See also Seneca, Epist. 10. and 41. and Marc. Antonin. lib. 2. § 40. 3dly. That we are to thank God for it, Epictet. apud Arrian. lib. 4. c. 4. 'Then I sinned, now I do not, THANKS BE TO GOD.'

But they did not imagine, that this divine assistance consisted only in moral suasion, or in presenting such objects whereby a man may be excited to virtuous actions; but in divine suggestions, aids and inspirations, as the emperor Antonine speaks, lib. 1. § 17.; who, in the same place, declares, that he had a good disposition of mind from the gods, which he ascribes to their beneficence: lib. 9. § 40. he mentions their co-operation; 'for, if they can at all co-operate with men, they also can in this,' namely, in the practice of virtue. But if any should except, that these relate to things in our own power, he answers, 'who has told thee that the gods do not assist even in these? Set about asking these things of the gods by prayer, and you will see the consequence.'

And they maintained, that the same divine aid was so necessary to virtue, that even the best disposed souls could not be without it. Maxim. Tyr. Dissert. 22. p. 228. says, ‘but they who have acquired the very best natural disposition of soul, halting between the highest virtue and the lowest vice, stand in need of the divine aid, to give the proper bias and direction to the better side. For their natural weakness makes them easily take the worst path. This by means of pleasures and lusts, flatters even well-disposed souls, and hurries them into the same paths of vice.’

It is therefore really a shame that heathen writers have entertained more humble sentiments of the infirmity and inability of our nature for good, and clearer conceptions of the divine assisting grace, and have said finer things about imploring it by prayer, than those professors of the excellency of the Christian religion, who ought to have put a due value on the holiness of true virtue. Thus they who are Pagans, will, in the day of judgment, rise up against those false Christians, the ungrateful enemies of the grace of God, no less to their condemnation, than the queen of the South, to that of the unbelieving Jews.

WITSIUS.

The righteousness of our Sanctification, which I called a *righteousness imparted*, or a righteousness wrought by Christ in the believer, is a supernatural principle of a new life, planted in the heart of every child of God by the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, whereby they endeavour to approve themselves to God and man, in performing what the word of God requires to be performed to both. Briefly let us unfold what is rolled up in this description.

First, Here is the *efficient*, or workman, the Holy Spirit; hence it is the several parts of holiness are called *fruits of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22; if the Spirit be not at the root, no such fruit can be seen on the branches as holiness; *sensual*, and *not having the Spirit*, are inseparably coupled, Jude 19. Man by his fall hath a double loss; God’s love to him, his likeness to God.—Christ restores both to his children; the first by his righteousness imputed to them, the second by his Spirit re-imparting the lost image of God to them, which consists in righteousness and true holi-

ness. Who but a man can impart his own nature, and beget a child like himself? and who, but the Spirit of God, can make a creature like God, by making him partaker of the divine nature?

Secondly, Here is the work produced, *a supernatural principle of a new life*.

1. By a principle of life, I mean, an inward disposition and quality, sweetly, powerfully, and constantly inclining it to that which is holy; so that the Christian, though passive in the production, is afterward active, and co-working with the Spirit in all actions of holiness, not as a lifeless instrument is in the hand of a musician, but as a living child in the hand of a father; therefore they are said to be *led by the Spirit*, Rom. viii.

2. It is a principle of new life; the Spirit’s work was not to chafe and recover what was swooning, but to work a life anew, in a soul quite dead; *you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses*. The devil comes as an *orator* to persuade by argument, when he tempts; the Spirit, as a *Creator*, when he converts. The devil draws forth and enkindles what he finds raked up in the heart before: but the Holy Spirit puts into the soul what he finds not there, called in Scripture the *seed of God*, 1 John iii. 9. *Christ formed in you*, Gal. iv. 19; *the new creature*, Gal. vi. 15; *the law put by God into the inner man*, Jer. xxxi. 33, which Paul calls *the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ*, Rom. viii. 2.

3. It is a supernatural principle by which we distinguish it from Adam’s righteousness and holiness, which was conatural to him, as now sin is to us; and, had he stood, would have been propagated to us, as naturally as now his sin is. Holiness was as natural to Adam’s soul, as health was to his body, they both resulting from principles pure and right disposed.

GURNALL.

We must ascribe to grace alone, without any exception, the whole of the Sanctification to which we are called, and not a part of it only. We are equally beholden to grace for the beginning, progress, and end of our sanctification, and for its efficacy in enabling us to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. When we set out in the way of salvation, it is grace that leads us into it; when we walk in it, it is grace which constrains us to do so; when

we run in it, it is grace which enables us to advance; when we persevere in it, it is grace that supports us; when we endure to the end, it is grace that conducts us to it. So that from the first step to the last, it is grace that directs and guides us to that which is good. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. If then we think, or say, or do any thing praiseworthy, it necessarily follows, that it is not of ourselves, but by the assistance and operation of grace.

Du Bosc.

Jesus Christ our Sanctification.

It is a dangerous mistake, which too many seem to fall into, that we are to depend upon Christ alone for justifying righteousness: but trust to our own active endeavours for inherent righteousness, for a victory over our corruptions, and for a conformity of heart and life unto the divine nature and will. Thence it is, that although they carry on a dreadful struggle with their corruptions, yet these, notwithstanding all their purposes, promises, vows, watchings, fastings, and other mechanical endeavours, will still prevail, and often throw them into great perplexity and confusion. They are sensible, that God demands their hearts, and that it is impossible their external reformatations should be acceptable, while their hearts are far from him, and led away with divers lusts. With what agony and toil do they therefore worry with their carnal and sensual affections, their impetuous appetites and passions; using various methods of mortification and discipline, to correct the disorders of their nature; and are but still rolling a stone upon the hill, which, as soon as they let go, it is at the bottom again! They are sensible that God requires sincerity in the inward man, in all the duties of religious worship. They therefore groan under the burden of their religious defects, their deadness, formality, and wandering thoughts in their approaches to God; condemn every duty they perform, and resolve upon more watchfulness and care for the future: but, alas! the difficulty remains; and they are ready to sink under discouraging apprehensions of their hypocrisy. Indeed, when they gain a little ground, their hopes are revived and their endeavours animated: but when deadness and corruption prevail, their distress and fear return and prevail

with them, their spirits sink, and they are ready to be quite discouraged. How many poor souls are thus labouring in the very fire, making a toilsome and melancholy drudgery of religion, by their legal attempts and their spirit of bondage!

I know by experience, that so far as this legal disposition prevails in us, it will not only darken our way, but check our progress in grace and holiness. If you would make any proficiency in your spiritual course, you ought to remember that the divine life must be carried on in your soul in the same manner, and by the same means, that it was begun there. We are not only justified by faith, but we must be sanctified by faith too; and of Christ's fulness must receive, even grace for grace. A cheerful dependence upon Christ for all supplies of grace and strength is the way to obtain his quickening, comforting, and strengthening influences: to have our hearts enlarged in the service of God, and to run the way of his commandments with delight. We must be dead to the law (to all dependence upon it and hope from it), if we would live unto God, Gal. ii. 13. Though we must discharge the duties of the law, and live in conformity to it; yet these must be done with a Gospel spirit, from Gospel principles and motives. *What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.* Would you then maintain a truly spiritual life, *the life which you live in the flesh must be by the faith of the Son of God*, Gal. ii. 20. Would you maintain a conversation worthy of your holy profession, *your good conversation must be in Christ*, 1 Pet. iii. 16. Would you live in the love of God and your neighbour, it is *faith which works by love*, Gal. v. 6. Would you get a victory over the world, and all its allurements, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*, 1 John v. 4. Would you be able to withstand temptations, it is *the shield of faith, by which you will be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked*, Eph. vi. 16. Would you walk honestly as in the day, you must *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, Rom. xiii. 13, 14. Would you be strengthened in the service of God against all opposition, you must *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, Eph. vi. 10. Would you have your heart purified from sinful lusts, appetites,

and passions, you must get *your heart purified by faith*, Acts xv. 9. Would you go on in your way rejoicing, *you must rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh*, Phil. iii. 3. Would you persevere in the fear and service of God, you must *be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*, 1 Pet. i. 5. It is not your business to run without legs, or fly without wings, but to go *forth in the strength of the Lord*. Despair of all sufficiency of your own to mortify your corruptions, and quicken your soul in the ways of God and godliness. Humbly repair to the Lord Jesus Christ, and cheerfully trust in him for grace and strength, to make a successful progress in your spiritual course. Let not your imperfections or corruptions discourage you; nor let your good purposes or performances be the ground of your hopes; but in a diligent use of Gospel means, *commit your way to the Lord, trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass*. I think you cannot so far misunderstand me, as to suppose I am exhorting you to depend on Christ for holiness in the careless neglect of good works. This would be presumption, and not faith. No! I am exhorting you to a realizing impression, that your works will not sanctify your heart, your affections, or conversation; when you have done all you can, that you must rely wholly upon the Lord Jesus Christ; and that you may rely confidently upon him, to fulfil the good pleasure of his goodness in your soul; and carry you on from grace to grace, and from strength to strength, till you come to the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

PRESIDENT DICKINSON.

Jesus Christ in believers is equally the Author and Principle of death and of life: *by him* they die unto sin, *by him* they live unto God. What the soul is to the body, that Jesus Christ is to believers: they live a spiritual life by him only. The divine and quickening power of his death and resurrection is the source of their new life. It is Christ who lives in them, who inspires, quickens, and governs them.

The Apostle said, that *Jesus Christ lived in him*, or, that he lived by Jesus Christ; and now he says, that he lives *by faith*; but all these expressions mean one and the same thing; for Christ is the Author of salvation and life to those only who

receive him by a true faith. He quickens and animates us only whilst he dwells in us; and he dwells in us by faith alone.

Whoever sincerely believes in Jesus Christ may say, *He gave himself for me*, Gal. ii. 20. *For me!* this is the language of faith, which applies to every Christian in particular the general promises of the Gospel; without which faith would have no solid foundation, and consequently no efficacy. But when we are fully convinced of this comfortable truth, we then feel ourselves drawn and attached entirely to Jesus Christ, and seek salvation and happiness in him alone; we then feel ourselves inflamed with love towards this merciful Saviour, who has loved us so much; and a sense of this necessarily produces spiritual life in us.

OSTERWALD.

How can we form an idea of an intimate union with Jesus Christ without conceiving that he who is united to him partakes of his virtue? In uniting us to himself, he changes us; in justifying us, he sanctifies us. It is impossible to be *grafted* in the *tree of life* without partaking of its sap and its life. Whoever is in Christ necessarily feels his efficacy and his influence. When a river empties itself into the sea, it loses its own nature, and takes that of the ocean into which it falls. When man is united to his Saviour he ceases to be what he was, and takes the nature and qualities of his Saviour, on whose bosom he happily loses himself, and empties all his cares. *If any man be in Christ*, he must be conformable to his Lord; a living head is inconsistent with dead members; life expels death.

SUPERVILLE.

The believer is a being of a singular nature. He lives, but has not in himself the source of his own life; it flows to him out of the fulness of another: *I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*. He is righteous; but his righteousness is derived from another. He is acquitted; but another has made the payment. He is guilty; but another has borne the punishment. He is restored to the favor of God, and enjoys his peace; but by the merits of another.

BENOIT.

As Christ is a Priest set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high, he preserves the stability of the better covenant, the new covenant, and perpetuates

the fruits of it; justification in blotting out the memory of our sins, and sanctification in writing the law in our hearts, Heb. viii. 1. 6. 10. 12. He is the Author of our first sanctification by his intercession, as the first-fruits of it was the sending that Spirit, by whose powerful operations the soul is reformed according to the divine image; and he is the Author of our repeated sanctification by the exercise of his advocacy. He is an Advocate in case of sin—in regard of the guilt, that it should not remain upon our persons; in regard of the power, that the contagion of it should not seize upon our vitals; in regard of the filth, that it might not remain, to unfit us for a fellowship with the Father and himself. His intercession in heaven is a continuation of that intercession on earth, whereby he testified his desire that we might be kept from the evil while we resided in an infectious world, *Keep them from the evil*, John xvii. 15; and *sanctified through his truth*, while we are upon an earth full of lying vanities, ver. 17. The end of his intercession is not for sharpness of wit, a pompous wealth, a luxurious prosperity, or a lazy peace; such things may be hurtful; but for faith, holiness, growth, wherein we can never be culpable. His intercession is not employed for low things, but for such as may fit us for an honor in another world. Mortification of sin, and holiness of conversation, are therefore called *things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God*, Col. iii. 1; compared with ver. 5, &c. things which come from above, by virtue of that session of Christ at the right hand of God, and the office he doth there exercise, which the Apostle explains to be a mortification of *our members which are upon the earth*, and since the great reason of his exaltation is his *hating iniquity and loving righteousness*, the end of his exaltation and of his intercession in that state is to manifest the same disposition, in the perfect expulsion of sin, and the full implantation of righteousness in us. The same dispositions which animated him to a dying on the cross here, do animate him to his intercession above, which is nothing else but a presenting his death, and a presenting not only his death, but all the motives which moved him to it, and the ends he aimed at in it: *He is manifested to take away sin*, 1 John iii. 5; manifested

in his humiliation on earth; manifested in his exaltation in heaven, to take away sin; sin in the pollution, as well as sin in the guilt. What he designed in the one, he designs in the other; the same end he aimed at in dying, he aims at in interceding. Since he is an Advocate in the virtue of his blood, he is an Advocate for the ends of his blood. He will not let sin continue in his members, which he came to wash off by his blood. As long as his love to righteousness and his aversion from sin continues in him, so long will he be acting in heaven, till he hath in the highest manner manifested to the full his affection to the one, and disaffection to the other, by utterly dispossessing out of the hearts of his people what he hates, both root and branch, and perfecting what he loves in all the dimensions of it. He doth not only sue out our pardon, but sue out a grant of those graces which are necessary preparatives and concomitants of pardon. The end of his intercession is no doubt the same with that of his exaltation, which is not only for *forgiveness of sin, but repentance*, Acts v. 31, which includes the whole sanctification. All the holiness believers have here is a fruit of this advocacy: the communication of that power which subdues corruption flows from it. Christ by his intercession receives all from his Father, that as a King he may convey all necessary supplies to us. But we must consider, that though Christ doth intercede for the sanctification of his people, yet it will not follow that any of them are at present perfect, and totally free from the relics of corruption. This is not intended by him in this life, any more than when he prayed for Peter: he desired not that he should be kept wholly from falling, but that his faith should be kept from totally failing. Sin is likewise suffered to continue in the best here, that men should not think that the acceptation of their persons doth arise from their own works and holiness, but from the sweet savour of the Mediator's sacrifice, continually presented in heaven. Yet perfection in grace will be the final issue of this advocacy. If grace should never be perfected, Christ would never be fully answered in his intercession, and so this office of his in heaven would want a manifestation of its true power and value.

CHARNOCK.

Sanctification the Effect of an Interest in Christ.

By virtue of an interest in Christ, the believer receives the Spirit of Christ for his sanctification : not indeed for his perfect sanctification, but for the perfecting of sanctification. Christ's righteousness is never applied imperfectly ; for to whomsoever it is imputed, it is made over wholly, and to all the intents and purposes it was wrought out, and brought in by Christ for. But the Spirit of Christ is imparted to believers, in measure, and in various degrees, as he seeth good : *Unto every one of us is grace given, according to the measure of the gift of Christ*, Eph. iv. 7. By this potent principle, the Spirit of Christ, sanctification is even, at first, universal in the whole man, and complete in parts : *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new*, 2 Cor. v. 17. He is a new man ; is born again ; hath a new nature, a new mind, a new understanding, a new conscience, a new heart and affections, and a new life. But though all be new in the believer, there is nothing in him that is perfectly new. He needs daily to pray, as Psal. li. 10, *Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me*. Yet, notwithstanding all the weakness of this new creature, the mixture and neighbourhood of the flesh, its contrary, and of all opposition it meets with from it, and of the low state it is oft brought into by the captivating power of sin ; yet doth the power of Christ's Spirit not only preserve the holy seed in the heart, but doth raise it up again, and will certainly perfect it. There was never a saving work of Christ wrought in the heart of a poor sinner, that Christ ever left to be matter of triumph to the devil. Christ is a wise builder ; when he lays the foundation, he knows what the perfecting of it will cost him, is provided with it, and resolved to lay it out, and to finish his work : *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform (or finish) it until the day of Jesus Christ*, Phil. i. 6.

By virtue of this interest in Christ, believers have all Christ's fulness for their supply. He is *all in all* to them, Col. iii. 11. *It pleaseth the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*, Col. i. 19. And surely this lodging of all fulness should

please, and doth highly please all believers : *And of (or out of) his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace*, John i. 16. *Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ*, Eph. iv. 7. Whence had Paul and John all their grace ? Out of Christ's fulness. Whence was it that they received so much grace beyond others ? It was *according to the measure of the gift of Christ*. But the stock and treasure is common to all believers. They are *partakers of Christ*, Heb. iii. 14, and *called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*, 1 Cor. i. 9. The Apostle, in Col. ii. 8, 9, 10, giveth a needful warning, *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit*. But how shall we know and discern the snare ? It is *after the tradition of men, after the rudiments (or elements, or principles) of the world, and not after Christ*. His argument to enforce this warning is deep and strong ; verse 9, *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. It dwelleth really, substantially, in this one man, Jesus Christ. So that they do deceive you, that direct you to any for supply but to him. If ye would *be filled with all the fulness of God*, as Eph. iii. 19, you must seek it, and find it in him, *in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily*. And this shall not be in vain : *And ye are complete in him*, verse 10. Never did, never could a believer use this fulness suitably to all its worth in itself, and to the gracious right he hath to use it.

But what is there in believers that Christ hath communion with ? All good is in him, and this is the believer's all ; and therefore it is easy to understand what their communion with Christ is, and what his communications to them are. He clothes and covers them with his righteousness, sanctifies them by his Spirit, and supplies them out of his fulness. But is there any thing in his people that Christ hath communion with ? I answer, Yes, there is ; and that is all in them, that either is consistent with their union with him, or that flows from that union. REV. R. TRAILL.

The Absolute Necessity of Grace.

ANOTHER branch of the doctrine of the Gospel, which many are prejudiced against, is, the doctrine of divine grace, as requisite to renew and purify our nature. Many

treat this doctrine as a chimera; and, which is not easy to account for, it meets with that treatment from some persons who profess some kind of religion. In the mean time, nothing is more plain than that denying the reality of grace is an undermining all true devotion. It destroys the use of prayer; for if there be no divine operation on the soul, to make men truly good and virtuous, what is it but a mocking of God, to apply to him for that end? Now this is contrary to the universal sense of mankind; not only Jews and Christians, but Mahometans, and Pagans themselves acknowledge that prayer and thanksgiving is a principal part of the service due by creatures to the Creator; that one of the chief things they should pray for, is good and virtuous inclinations, and a pure disposition of mind; that they who have attained to these excellent things should thank God for them; that is, acknowledge him as the source of them: whereas he who denies divine grace, in order to be consistent with himself, must maintain that a man must neither petition God to make him good and virtuous, nor thank him for his being so, that he should neither seek his assistance in order to perform duty, or in order to avoid sin.

It is objected against this doctrine, that it interferes with the liberty of a man's will; that a man is not free in doing good, or avoiding evil, if he be thus influenced to it by an external cause. But surely our fellow-creatures are external causes, as well as the Creator: men are free in doing good, though influenced by other men: why should the case alter about the more powerful influence of God? Besides, without any prejudice to free-will, men are (almost continually) passive in receiving impressions of bodily objects; why may it not be the same as to impressions of spiritual objects? Though men are passive in receiving impressions of visible things, yet they are free in their inclination to, or aversion from them, and in pursuing or avoiding them, and in all their actions relating to them. It is easy to apply this to spiritual impressions. Both flow from one cause: the Author of grace, and the Author of nature is one and the same: it is from God that men receive invisible light, and bodily strength; it is he that continues as well as gives them: men are passive in receiving both, yet free and active in making use of both: there is no

reason why spiritual light and spiritual strength may not be conceived as derived from God, and consistent with the liberty of man in the same manner.

There is a necessity for acknowledging a divine influence in giving and continuing the common exercise of reason, and soundness of mind: without that favorable influence, reason could not subsist. A few grains of matter misplaced in the brain are sufficient to make the greatest wisdom on earth sicken into raving and distraction. If liberty is not hindered by that influence that preserves the exercise of reason in general, why should it be thought to be hindered by that stronger influence that inclines and enables to the due exercise of reason about things invisible and eternal? To judge truly of the matter, it is certain the liberty of man is not hindered by the grace of God, but enlarged and perfected by it.

Sometimes the doctrine of grace is charged with *enthusiasm* by persons who, it would seem, do not know what *enthusiasm* is. It is indeed enthusiasm to pretend to grace for revelation of new doctrines: the grace offered in the Gospel is only in order to a right impression and improvement of the doctrines already revealed in the Scriptures. A man may be charged with enthusiasm when he pretends to be acted upon by divine grace, while he is really destitute of it. But to argue against the reality of grace, because there are some counterfeits of it, (as there are almost of all good things,) is a way of reasoning which no man will directly avow; and all ridicule founded on it (as there is a great deal that has no other foundation) should be looked on as weakness and extravagance.

It is no less unreasonable to charge this doctrine with favoring sloth and indolence; as if it encouraged men to neglect activity in duty, because they are passive in receiving grace. The Gospel teaches men to be active in seeking grace, and in using it. And it is plain that such powerful assistance is the greatest encouragement in the world to diligence and application. He that would effectually disprove the necessity of grace, must prove one of these two things, either that the ends for which grace is offered are useless; or that these ends may be obtained without grace: he that considers these two things will hardly undertake to prove either of them. A man

must have a very odd way of thinking that imagines the ends, for which grace is offered, are useless. How will a man pretend to prove, that it is no way requisite to the perfection and happiness of our souls, to be far more deeply affected with the eternal objects of faith, than with the short-lived objects of sense: to have the heart more enamoured with the infinitely amiable excellency of the Creator, than with any faint shadows to be found in the creatures: to have the affections more strongly bent on the enjoyment of the All-sufficient Source of good, that boundless ocean of blessedness and perfection, than on the enjoyment of empty fleeting vanities? not to insist on the other various ingredients of solid devotion, and of holiness, and integrity of heart and life. To disprove the use and necessity of these things, a man must prove that God is not the chief happiness of our souls; or that the enjoyment of God does not require the love of God, or his image, and conformity to him; or that holiness is not his image. As to the necessity of grace in order to holiness, let us but compare the disposition of mind just now mentioned with the temper of those that despise grace: the one is just the reverse of the other: it is true, they may know spiritual objects, they may hear, and read, and speak a great deal of them; for example, of God's infinite perfections: but then it is in such a manner, that their hearts are less affected with them oft-times, than with the most insignificant trifles: they themselves must confess it ought to be otherwise, and that their minds ought to be more deeply penetrated, and more strongly affected with these incomparable objects, than with any thing else in the world: and in effect, one would think it should be sufficient to convince men of the necessity of grace, to compare what they must acknowledge they *ought* to be with what they *are*: to compare that cold, jejune, lifeless frame, with which generally men think of the most excellent, and most important objects, with that vivacity of soul, that ardour of love, vehemence of desire, and these transports of joy with which it is reasonable such meditations should be accompanied.

On the other hand, experience shows that these persons, who have been reformed from a life of scandalous immorality or of stupid carelessness about eternity, to a life of strict integrity and serious devotion,

are persons whose constant practice it has been, since that happy change, to apply by prayer for divine grace: this may be said to be evident from experience, if mutual faith and trust be allowed among men, and the testimony of multitudes of the best in the world be reckoned an argument of any weight. Never any yet refuted them by contrary experiences; a devout man, praying for happiness without praying for holiness, is a character yet unheard of.

There have been many persons who, while they neglected the doctrine of grace, have spoke and wrote excellent things about virtue. There are such pretended reformers of mankind, perhaps, in all ages. The virtues they recommend are, many of them at least, the same with the duties the Gospel enjoins: so that these persons extol God's precepts, without acknowledging his grace, as if they could attain to his image without his assistance. And indeed many of them speak a thousand excellent things. But speaking and practising are two different things. Their practice is the reverse of their own precepts. Their conduct shows that their morality consists chiefly in fruitless speculations, and that their schemes are contrived and made use of for amusement, more than any thing else.

They may have the same effect with many other arts and sciences, to gratify men's curiosity and perhaps their vanity. But the art of making men truly virtuous and happy by their own skill and strength, is not yet invented. The results of all efforts that way is the exposing the weakness and vanity of the undertakers, and the confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, and the necessity of the grace offered in it. The more we consider the success of such reformers, the more we may be convinced that their systems are fitter for tickling the ear, than mending the heart. Human corruption proves always too hard for human eloquence; it is ever found to have strong enough footing in the heart to stand it out against all the golden sayings of the tongue. No doubt it is good to use all kind of helps against corruption, and to neglect no assistance against so dangerous an enemy: but to think these natural helps sufficient, without the assistance of grace; to pretend to bear down sin and vice merely by eloquence and philosophy; to jest it away merely by witty satire and lampoon; to convert men by

elegant phrases and delicate turns of the thought; is such a chimerical project, and which has so constantly failed in the experiment, that it is a wonder any body should seriously think it practicable. History sheweth the weak and contemptible efficacy of the sublimest philosophy of the heathens, when it encountered with inveterate corruptions, or violent temptations; how many of them that spake of virtue like angels, yet lived in a manner like brutes: whereas, in all ages, poor Christian plebeians, unpolished by learning, but earnest in prayer, and depending upon grace, have, in comparison of these others, lived rather like angels than men; and shown such an invincible steadfastness in the practice of virtue, as shameth all the philosophy in the world. Many of these ancient philosophers, who reasoned admirably in favor of virtue, and particularly of truth, honesty, and sincerity, are believed to have maintained one eternal Deity in private, and yet most disingenuously complied with the abominable idolatry of the multitude in public; while those who depended on the grace of Jesus Christ shewed an integrity in their zeal for the one true God, which death and tortures could not overcome; they forced their way through all the cruelties that malice could inflict, till they spread the knowledge of the true God and his laws through the known world: whereas, for all the speculations of the philosophers, the world might have been lying as it was to this day.

REV. J. MACLAURIN.

God's Method of Imparting Grace.

It is very true, that all grace and goodness in the hearts of the saints is entirely from God; and they are universally and immediately dependent on him for it. But yet some persons are mistaken, as to the manner of God's communicating himself and his Holy Spirit, in imparting saving grace to the soul. He gives his Spirit to be united to the faculties of the soul, and to dwell there after the manner of a principle of nature; so that the soul, in being endued with grace, is endued with a new nature: but nature is an abiding thing. All the exercises of grace are entirely from Christ: but those exercises are not from Christ, as something that is alive moves and stirs something that is without life, and yet remains without life; but as having life communicated to it; so as through

Christ's power to have inherent in itself a vital nature. In the soul where Christ savingly is, there he lives. He does not only live without it, so as violently to actuate it, but he lives in it, so that that also is alive. Grace in the soul is as much from Christ, as the light in a glass, held out in the sun-beams, is from the sun. But this represents the manner of the communication of grace to the soul but in part; because the glass remains as it was, the nature of it not being at all changed; it is as much without any lightsomeness in its nature as ever. But the soul of a saint receives light from the Sun of righteousness, in such a manner, that its nature is changed, and it becomes properly a luminous thing; not only does the Sun shine in the saints, but they also become little suns, partaking of the nature of the Fountain of their light. In this respect, the manner of their derivation of light is like that of the lamps in the tabernacle, rather than that of a reflecting glass; which, though they were lit up by fire from heaven, yet thereby became themselves burning, shining things. The saints do not only *drink of the water of life*, that flows from the original fountain; but this water becomes a fountain of water in them, springing up there, and flowing out of them, John iv. 14, and vii. 38, 39. Grace is compared to a seed implanted, that not only is in the ground, but has hold of it, has root there, and grows there, and is an abiding principle of life and nature there.

PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

The Perpetuity of Grace.

He is our rock, and His work is perfect, Deut. xxxii. 4. He doth not begin a building, and then leave it off: none of his designs break in the middle, or fall short of their end. *He will perfect that good work which he hath begun, to the day of Jesus Christ*, Phil. i. 6. And how often is he called *the strength of those that trust in Him, their buckler, and His way perfect*, Ps. xviii. 30.

Hence is the stability of grace the perseverance of the saints; it is founded upon his unchangeableness. Not that they are unchangeable, though truly sanctified, if they and their graces were left to their own management: no, it is he who not only gives that rich portion to those he adopts to be his children, but keeps it for them, and them in the possession of it.

He *maintains the lot of our inheritance*, Psal. xvi. 5. And to build that persuasion of perseverance upon his truth and power engaged in it, is no presumption; yea, it is high dishonor to him to question it.

But when nature is set to judge of grace, it must speak according to itself, and therefore very unsuitably to that which it speaks of. Natural wits apprehend not the spiritual tenor of the covenant of grace, but model it to their own principles, and quite disguise it: they think of nothing but their resolves and moral purposes; or if they take up with some confused notion of grace, they imagine it put into their own hands, to keep or to lose it, and will not stoop to a continual dependence on the strength of another, rather choosing that game of hazard, though it is certain loss and undoing to do for themselves.

But the humble believer is otherwise taught; he *hath not so learned Christ*. He sees himself beset with enemies without, and buckled to a treacherous heart within, that will betray him to them; and he dares no more trust himself to himself, than to his most professed enemies. Thus it ought to be, and the more the heart is brought to this humble petitioning for that ability, and strengthening, and perfecting, from God, the more shall it find both stability, and peace from the assurance of that stability.

And certainly, the more the Christian is acquainted with himself, the more will he go out of himself for his perfecting and establishing. He finds that when he thinks to go forward, he is driven backward, and that sin gets hold of him, oftentimes when he thought to have smitten it. He finds that such is the miserable inconstancy of his heart in spiritual things, the vanishing of his purposes and breaking off of his thoughts, that they usually die ere they be brought forth: so that when he hath thought, I will pray more reverently, and set myself to behold God when I speak to him, and watch more over my heart, that it fly not out and leave me,—possibly the first time he sets to it, thinking to be master of his intention, he finds himself more scattered, and disordered, and dead, than at any time before. When he hath conceived thoughts of humility and self-abasement, and thinks, Now I am down, and laid low within myself, to rise and look big no more,—some vain fancy creeps in anon, and encourages him, and raises

him up to his old estate; so that in this plight, had he not higher strength to look at, he would sit down and give over all, as utterly hopeless of ever attaining to his journey's end.

But when he considers whose work that is within him, even these small beginnings of desires, he is encouraged by the greatness of the work, not to despise and despair of the small appearance of it in its beginning, *not to despise the day of small things*, Zech. iv. 10; and knowing that it is *not by any power, nor by might, but by His Spirit*, that it shall be accomplished, he lays hold on that word, *Though thy beginning be small, yet thy latter end shall greatly increase*, Job viii. 7.

The believer *looks to Jesus*, [*ἀπορρυντες*,] Heb. xii. 2—*looks off* from all oppositions and difficulties, *looks above them to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; the Author, and therefore Finisher*. Thus, that royal dignity is interested in the maintenance and completion of what he hath wrought. Notwithstanding all thy imperfections, and the strength of sin, he can and will subdue it. Notwithstanding thy condition is so light and loose, that it were easy for any wind of temptation to blow thee away, yet he shall hold thee in his right hand, and there thou shalt be firm as the earth, that is so settled by his hand, that though it hangs on nothing, yet nothing can remove it. Though thou art weak, he is strong; and it is *he that strengthens thee, and renews thy strength*, Isa. xl. 28: when it seems to be gone and quite spent, he makes it fresh, and greater than ever before. The word here rendered *renew*, signifies *change*: they shall have for their own, his strength. A weak believer, and his strong Saviour, will be too hard for all that can rise against them. It is here fit, as in statues, *hominem cum basi metiri*, to measure the man with the basis on which he stands; and there is no taking the right measure of a Christian but in that way.

Thou art now, indeed, exposed to great storms and tempests, but he builds thee on himself, makes thee, by believing, to found on him; and so, though the winds blow and the rain fall, yet thou standest, being built on him thy Rock. And this, indeed, is our safety, the more we cleave to our Rock and fasten on him. This is the only thing that *establishes* us, and *perfects*, and *strengthens* us; therefore,

well is that word added, *θεμελιώσαι*, *found* you, or *settle* you, on your foundation. This is the firmness of the church against the gates of hell; He is a strong foundation for its establishment, and a living foundation, having influence into the building, for perfecting it; for it is a living house, and the foundation is a root sending life into the stones, so that they grow up, as this Apostle speaks, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

It is the inactivity of faith on Jesus, that keeps us so imperfect, and wrestling still with our corruptions, without any advancement. We wrestle in our own strength too often, and so are justly, yea, necessarily foiled; it cannot be otherwise, till we make Him our strength. This we are still forgetting, and had need to be put in mind of, and ought frequently to remind ourselves. We would be at doing for ourselves, and insensibly fall into this folly, even after much smarting for it, if we be not watchful against it. There is this wretched natural independency in us, that is so hard to beat out. All our projectings are but castles in the air, imaginary buildings without a foundation, till once laid on Christ. But never shall we find heart-peace, sweet peace, and progress in holiness, till we be driven from it, to make Him all our strength; till we be brought to do nothing, to attempt nothing, to hope or expect nothing, but in Him; and then shall we indeed find his fulness and all-sufficiency, and *be more than conquerors through Him who hath loved us.*

LEIGHTON.

This divine agent, the Holy Spirit, *dwells* in all the faithful; he is given to them *to abide with them*: he consecrates them to himself, as his *habitation* and his *temple*: and he will maintain his residence, at least he will not finally relinquish it, though to express his displeasure he may depart for a season. He has undertaken the work of purification, and he will finish. This we conclude from the descriptions given of his offices, and of his own infinite perfections.

The spiritual life of believers, or their sanctification, is no other than an emanation from him. Will this sacred stream cease to flow? It is, as our Lord declares, *the well of water, which shall be in them; springing up into everlasting life*, John iv. 14. And any thing short of the final event will not fulfil the promise. It is *the unction*

of the Holy One, which *abideth in them*: and by which *they shall abide in Him*: and it is this principle which discriminates them from hypocrites and apostates. It is therefore called *the incorruptible seed, the seed of God, which remaineth in them*; so that their *leaf* and their *fruit* does not finally *wither*, nor do they *forsake their God as the wicked doth*, 1 John ii. 20, 27; iii. 9; Ps. i. 3. Take from them this security, and no strength or energies of their own will be sufficient to preserve them.

They view with thankfulness what God has done for them, and from the past they are taught to rest assured of the completion of their sanctification and of their felicity. *It is God*, they say, *who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts*, 2 Cor. i. 22. What do these expressions imply, but a certainty of the great event to the truly regenerate? Is the contract SEALED to them? Then there shall be a full performance. Have they received an EARNEST? This is a sacred pledge from him, who cannot fail in his engagements: it is a part of payment, and an infallible security, that in due season he will bestow the whole of the promised inheritance. They are therefore said to be *sealed*, not for a time only, but *unto the day of redemption*, Eph. iv. 30.

In like manner, they *have the first-fruits of the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 23. Now, first-fruits are the pledge and the commencement of harvest, valuable in themselves, but particularly precious as containing an assurance, that *the in-gathering* is approaching, and that the full produce shall soon be secured. Thus the graces of the Spirit, the holy principles, tempers, and habits, which he forms in believers, amount to a declaration, that *he will establish their hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints*, 1 Thess. iii. 13.

What an enlarged and exalted view of the great plan of divine mercy does this doctrine exhibit! The three Persons of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all united in the contrivance and execution! all engaged and pledged for the completion of the work in the final and everlasting salvation of all them that believe! Let us study the subject for the confirmation of our faith and hope, and for the increase of our joy and zeal. *Do*

not our hearts burn within us? O let us trust, and love, and praise, and wonder!
REV. T. ROBINSON.

Since we stand not, like Adam, upon our own bottom, but are branches of such a vine as never withers, members of such a head as never dies, sharers in such a Spirit as cleanseth, healeth, and purifieth the heart, partakers of such promises as are sealed with the oath of God;—since we live, not by our own life, but by the life of Christ; are not led or sealed by our own spirit, but by the Spirit of Christ; do not obtain mercy by our own prayers, but by the intercession of Christ; stand not reconciled to God by our own endeavours, but by the propitiation wrought by Christ, *who loved us when we were enemies and in our blood*; who is both willing and able to save us to the uttermost, and to preserve his own mercies in us; to whose office it belongs, to take order that none who are given unto him be lost;—undoubtedly, that life of Christ in us, which is thus underpropped, though it be not privileged from temptations, no not from backslidings, yet is an *abiding* life. He who has raised our soul from death, will either preserve our feet from falling, or, if we do fall, will heal our backslidings, and will save us freely.

BP. REYNOLDS.

Some, perhaps, may be ready to object: ‘If the preservation of believers depend upon God, in the way and manner asserted, they have no occasion to be at all careful how they live. No great harm can befall them, for they will be sure to be safe in the end.’ In answer to which I shall only observe, that the strength of this objection was long since tried on our Lord himself by the devil. And as it appeared of no force to him, though the tempter proposed it as the necessary consequence of those promises made by the Father to Christ, as a man and mediator, respecting his preservation; so it appears to have as little in the present case. The grand proposition in the devil’s argument was, *If thou art the Son of God, his angels will certainly preserve thee; thou canst not be hurt*. And his conclusion was, therefore, *without any danger thou mayest cast thyself down from this eminence*, Matt. iv. 5, 6. So, in the present case, the argument contained in the objection is, if you be a

child of God, and in union with Christ, your perseverance is certain: for, being the charge of Omnipotence, it is impossible you should finally fall. Therefore, you may safely bid adieu to all circumspection; you need not fear sin, or its consequences; nor is there any occasion to be solicitous about walking with God in the ways of holiness. But, as our Lord, who had not the least doubt of the special care of his Father over him, as man, rejected Satan’s proposal with the utmost abhorrence; knowing that it was a temptation from beneath, and the argument used to enforce it, an abuse of the Scripture; so the believer, though he is fully persuaded that grace reigns in every part of his salvation, and though it strongly appears in that special care of God, which is incessantly exercised over him in his perseverance to eternal life, yet he is well aware, that he is not to continue in sin *that grace may abound*. On every such suggestion, therefore, he will from his heart say, *God forbid!* ABRAHAM BOOTH.

The Tendency of Grace to Holy Practice.

I, the Lord, change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed, Mal. iii. 6. We, poor and weak men, change with every wind; strong to-day, and weak to-morrow; fixed and resolute to-day, shaken and staggering to-morrow; running forward to-day, and revolting as fast to-morrow; no hold to be taken of our promises, no trust to be given to our covenants; like Peter on the water, we walk one step, and we sink another. All our comfort is this—our strength and standing is not founded in ourselves, but in the rock whereon we are built, and in the power of God, by which we are kept through faith unto salvation, out of whose hands none are able to pluck us. Our very actions are wrought in us, and carried on unto their end by the power of Christ, who hath mercy, wisdom, and strength enough to rescue us, as from the power of hell and death, so from the danger of our own sickly and froward hearts. . . .

But some will then say, ‘Since we may be secure, if God’s grace and power alone be our strength, let us then commit ourselves and our salvation unto him, and, in the mean time, give over all thoughts and care of it ourselves, and live as we list; no act of ours can frustrate the counsel of the love of God.’ To this we answer with

the Apostle, *God forbid*. Though the enemies of free grace do thus argue, yet they who indeed have the grace of God in their hearts, have better learned Christ. For it is against the formal nature of the grace and Spirit of Christ to suffer those in whom it dwelleth, to give over themselves unto security and neglect of God: for grace is a vital and active principle; and doth so work in us, as that it doth withal dispose and direct us unto working too. The property of grace is to fight against and to kill sin, as being most extremely contrary unto it: and therefore it is a most irrational way of arguing, to argue from the being of grace to the life of sin. *How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* Rom. vi. 2. If we be dead to sin, this is argument enough, in the Apostle's judgment, why we should *set our affections on things above*, Col. iii. 2, 3. The grace of God doth not only serve to bring salvation, but to *teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*, Tit. ii. 11, 12. He who hath decreed salvation as the end, hath decreed also the antecedent means unto that end to be used, in manner suitable to the condition of reasonable and voluntary agents, unto whom it belongs, having their minds by grace enlightened, and their wills by grace prevented, to co-operate with the same grace in the further pursuance of their salvation. And if at any time corruption should, in God's children, abuse his grace and efficacy unto such presumptuous resolutions, they would quickly rue so unreasonable and carnal a way of arguing, by the woful sense of God's displeasure in withdrawing the comforts of his grace from them, which would make them ever after take heed how they turned the grace of God into wantonness any more. Certainly, the more the servants of God are assured of his assistance, the more careful they are in using it unto his own service. Who more sure of the grace of God than the Apostle Paul, who gloried of it as that that made him what he was? *By the grace of God, I am that I am*; who knew that God's grace was sufficient for him, and that nothing could separate him from the love of Christ; who knew whom he had believed, and that the grace of the Lord was exceeding abundant towards him; and yet who more tender and fearful

of sin? who more set against corruption, more abundant in duty, more pressing unto perfection, than he? This is the nature of grace, to animate and actuate the faculties of the soul in God's service, to ratify our covenants, and to enable us to perform them. **BR. REYNOLDS.**

The tendency of grace in the heart to holy practice is very direct, and the connexion most natural, close, and necessary. True grace is not an unactive thing; there is nothing in heaven or earth of a more active nature; for it is life itself, and the most active kind of life, even spiritual and divine life. It is no barren thing; there is nothing in the universe that in its nature has a greater tendency to fruit. Godliness in the heart has a direct relation to practice, as a fountain has to a stream, or as the luminous nature of the sun has to beams sent forth, or as life has to breathing, or the beating of the pulse, or any other vital act; or as a habit or principle of action has to action; for it is the very nature and notion of grace, that is a principle of holy action or practice. Regeneration, which is that work of God in which grace is infused, has a direct relation to practice; for it is the very end of it, with a view to which the whole work is wrought: all is calculated and framed, in this mighty and manifold change wrought in the soul, so as directly to tend to this end; *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, Ephes. ii. 10. Yea, it is the very end of the redemption of Christ; *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Titus ii. 14. *He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again*, 2 Cor. v. 15. *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* Heb. ix. 14. *And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprouceable in his sight*, Col. i. 21, 22. *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation*, 1 Peter i. 18:

That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life, Luke i. 74, 75. God often speaks of holy practice, as the end of that great typical redemption, the redemption from Egyptian bondage; as *Let my son go, that he may serve me,* Exod. iv. 3. So chap. iv. 23; vii. 16; viii. 1. 20; ix. 1. 13; and x. 3. And this is also declared to be the end of election: *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain,* John xv. 16. *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love,* Eph. i. 4. *Created unto good works, which God hath fore-ordained that we should walk in them,* Eph. ii. 10. Holy practice is as much the end of all that God does about his saints, as fruit is the end of all the husbandman does about the growth of his field or vineyard, as the matter is often represented in Scripture: Matt. iii. 10; xiii. 8. 23-30. 38; xxi. 19. 33, 34. Luke xiii. 6. John xv. 1, 2. 4-6. 8. 1 Cor. iii. 9. Heb. vi. 7, 8. Isa. v. 1-8. Cant. viii. 11, 12. Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. And therefore every thing in a true Christian is calculated to reach this end. This fruit of holy practice, is what every grace, and every discovery, and every individual thing, which belongs to Christian experience, has a direct tendency to.

PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

Difference between quickening and restraining Grace.

SANCTIFYING grace keeps the soul from sin, by destroying it; but restraining grace keeps the soul from sin, only by imprisoning it.

There may appear but little difference betwixt the conversation of a child of God, whom special grace doth sanctify; and one in a state of nature, whom common grace doth only restrain. Doth the one walk blamelessly without offence? doth he avoid the grosser pollutions of the world? so doth the other. A star is not more like a star than these meteors may be like them.

Sanctifying grace strikes especially at the sins of the heart; but restraining grace, usually, only hinders the sins of the life.

Restraining grace watches without; but true grace dwells within: and, as Christ speaks of the church of Pergamos, it dwells there, *where Satan's seat is.* It rules in the midst of its enemies; and it is engaged so to do for its own security, that it may still crush them as they arise in the heart.

True grace, when it beats back sin, follows it and pursues it into the heart, and there searches for it: and if it sees it but breathe in a thought, or stir in a desire, presently it falls upon it and destroys it.

Sanctifying grace, when it keeps a soul from sin, always engages the will against it; but common and restraining grace only awakens and rouses the conscience against it.

The will and conscience are two leading faculties of the soul; the one commands what shall be done, and the other informs what ought to be done. And all the rest of the faculties and affections of the soul take part and side with these two. In a godly man these two are at an agreement. What conscience prompts, the will commands, and the inferior faculties are all ready to execute.

Where restraining grace only resists and hinders sin, it doth it by setting one faculty and affection of the soul against another; but, where sanctifying grace hinders it, it sets the same faculty and affection of the soul against itself. Restraining grace sets one affection against another: conscience against will; the fear of hell against the love of sin; hellish terrors against sinful pleasures; God's threatenings against the devil's flatteries. But when sanctifying grace opposes and hinders sin, it sets the same faculty and affection of the soul against itself; will against will; love against love; desire against desire. He wills the commission of sin, it is true; but yet, at the same time, he wills the mortification of it. He loves to gratify his sin; but yet, at the same time, he wills the crossing of it too. He desires to enjoy that pleasure and contentment that he fancies he may take in sin, and yet he desires, at the same time, to destroy it. Here is one and the same faculty against itself: and the reason of this is, because a child of God hath two principles in every single faculty. There is in him a mixture of flesh and spirit; a carnal part that sides with sin, and a spiritual part that always contradicts and opposes it; and these two are spread over

his whole soul, and are mingled with every power and faculty thereof; so that he can neither do the evil nor the good that he would do, without contradiction, strife, and reluctancy. Now try yourselves by this, when you are tempted to sin; what is it that resists it? is it your will, or is it only your conscience? are you only frightened from it? doth the fear of hell overcome the love of sin? All this may be from a mere restraint in those who altogether are unacquainted with the power of sanctifying grace. This is the symptom and character of a gracious soul, that, when it is most inclinable unto sin, yet, at the same time, it is most averse from it. When it most wisheth the accomplishment of sin, yet, even then, it strongly wisheth the subduing and mortifying of that sin. I know that this appears a riddle and a strange paradox to wicked men; but those, who have any true sense of the work of grace upon their own hearts, know it to be a truth, and rejoice in the experience that they have of it.

Restraining and sanctifying grace differ in the motives and arguments that they make use of for the resisting of sin.

There are two general topics or common-places whence all arguments against sin are drawn, and those are the Law and the Gospel. Both of these administer such weapons, as, if rightly used, are very effectual for the beating down of sin. And, commonly, restraining grace useth those only that are borrowed from the law. It urges the command; it thunders the curse; it brandishes the sword of justice; and makes reports of nothing but hell and eternal damnation, and such like arguments, that scare men from the committing of their sins, though still they love them. Now sanctifying grace, though it also makes a most profitable use of these very arguments, yet it chiefly useth more mild and more ingenuous motives, drawn from the love of God, from the death of Christ, from the comforts of the Holy Ghost; and these, though they strike softer, yet wound deeper.

BP. HOPKINS.

Difference between Grace and Gifts.

It is not gifts, but grace, which makes a Christian: For,—

1. Gifts are from a common work of the Spirit. Now a man may partake of all the common gifts of the Spirit, and yet

be a reprobate; for therefore they are called common, because they are indifferently dispensed by the Spirit to good and bad; to them that are believers, and to them that are not.

They that have grace, have gifts; and they that have no grace, may have the same gifts; for the Spirit works in both: nay, in this sense, he that hath no grace, may be under a greater work of the Spirit (*quoad hoc*) as to this thing, than he that hath most grace: a graceless professor may have greater gifts than the most holy believer: he may out-pray, and out-preach, and out-do them; but they in sincerity and integrity out-go him.

2. Gifts are for the use and good of others; they are given *in ordinandum alium*, as the schoolmen speak, for the profiting and edifying of others; so says the Apostle, *they are given to profit withal*, 1 Cor. xii. 7. Eph. iv. 12.

Now, a man may edify another by his gifts, and yet be unedified himself; he may be profitable to another, and yet unprofitable to himself. . . .

3. It is beyond the power of the greatest gifts to change the heart; a man may preach like an apostle, pray like an angel, and yet may have the heart of a devil. It is grace only that can change the heart; the greatest gifts cannot change it, but the least grace can; gifts may make a man a scholar, but grace makes a man a believer.

Now if gifts cannot change the heart, then a man may have the greatest gifts, and yet be but almost a Christian.

4. Many have gone laden with gifts to hell: no doubt Judas had great gifts; for he was a preacher of the Gospel; and our Lord Jesus Christ would not set him to work, and not fit him for the work; yet 'Judas has gone to his own place:' the Scribes and Pharisees were men of great gifts, and yet, 'Where is the wise? where is the scribe?'

The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; 1 Cor. i. 18-20. *Them that perish*, who are they? Who! the wise and the learned, both among Jews and Greeks; these are called them that perish. A great bishop said, when he saw a poor shepherd weeping over a toad: 'The poor illiterate world attain to heaven, while we with all our learning fall into hell.'

There are three things must be done for us, if ever we would avoid perishing.

We must be thoroughly convinced of sin.

We must be really united to Christ.

We must be instated in the Covenant of Grace.

Now the greatest gifts cannot stand us in any one of these.

They cannot work thorough convictions.

They cannot effect our union.

They cannot bring us into covenant-relation.

And, consequently, they cannot preserve from eternal perishing; and if so, then a man may have the greatest gifts, John iv. 14. and yet be but almost a Christian.

5. Gifts may decay and perish: they do not lie beyond the reach of corruption; indeed grace shall never perish, but gifts will; grace is incorruptible, though gifts are not; grace is *a spring, whose waters fail not*, Isa. lviii. 11.; but the streams of gifts may be dried up. If grace be corruptible in its own nature, as being but a creature; yet it is incorruptible in regard of its conserver, as being the new creature; *he that did create it in us, will conserve it in us; he that did begin it, will also finish it*, Heb. xii. 2.

Gifts have their root in nature, but grace hath its roots in Christ; and, therefore, though gifts may die and wither, yet grace shall abide for ever.

Now if gifts are perishing, then, though he that hath the least grace is a Christian, he that hath the greatest gifts may be but almost a Christian.

MATT. MEAD.

Reasons for the Necessity of Good Works.

OUT of that which hath been spoken, three reasons may be gathered for the necessity of good works.

First, it is the end of our faith and justification by Christ, yea the end why he shed his blood for us, that we being reconciled to God in him, might bring forth fruits of righteousness, which else we could never have done. This is no speculation, but plain Scripture. St. Peter, 1 Ep. ii. 24, telleth us, that *Christ his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness*. St. Paul, Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. *The grace of God, saith he, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men; (wherefore?) teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly*

lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These words contain the sum of all I have hitherto told you;—that Christ is therefore given us to be a propitiation for our sins, and to justify us, that in him we might walk before God in newness of life; so to obtain a crown of righteousness in the world to come.

Answerable is that place, Eph. ii. 10, where the Apostle having told us, ver. 8, 9, *we are saved by grace, through faith, and not of works, lest any man should boast*; he adds presently, (lest his meaning might be mistaken, as it is of too many,) that *we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*: as if he should say, those works of obedience ordained by God aforetime in his law for us to walk in, which we could not perform of ourselves, now God hath as it were new moulded us in Jesus Christ, that we might perform them in him; namely, by way of acceptance, though they come short of that exactness the law requireth. And thus to be saved is to be saved by grace and favour, and not by the merit of works; because the foundation whereby ourselves and our services are approved in the eyes of God, and *acquitted of guilt*, (which the Scripture calleth to be *justified*,) is the mere favour of God in Jesus Christ, and not any thing in us. And this way of salvation excludes all boasting: for what have we to boast of, when all the righteousness of our works is none of ours, but Christ's imputed to us; whereby only, and not for any merit in themselves, they become acceptable and have promise of reward? But that men should be saved by Christ, though they be idle and do nothing, I know no such grace of God revealed in Scripture.

Now that in Christ we may perform works of righteousness which God will accept and crown, is plain by the tenor of Scripture. St. Paul desires that the *Philippians might be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God*, Phil. i. 11. And the same Apostle tells the Romans, *That being made free from sin, and become*

servants to God, they have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, Rom. vi. 22; that is, as the Syriac turns it, they have holy fruits, whose end is life eternal.

And if we would seriously consider it, we should find, that the more we believe this righteousness of faith in Christ, the more reason we have to perform works of service and obedience unto God, than if we believed it not. For if our works would not be acceptable with God unless they were complete in every point as the law required; if there were no reward to be looked for at the hands of God unless we could merit it by the worthiness of our deeds; who that considers his own weakness and insufficiency would not sooner despair, than go about to please God by works? He would think it better to do nothing at all, than to endeavour what he could never hope to attain, and so lose his labour. But we, who believe that those who serve God in Christ have their failings and wants covered with his righteousness, and so their works accepted as if they were in every point as they should be; why should not we of all men fall to work, being sure by Christ's means and merit we shall not lose our labour?

A second motive why we should do good works is, because they are the way and means ordained by God to obtain the reward of eternal life, without which we shall never attain it. *Without holiness no man shall see God, Heb. xii. 14. Look to yourselves, saith St. John, Ep. ii. ver. 8., that ye lose not those things ye have wrought, but that ye may receive a full reward.* The angel's message from heaven to devout Cornelius was, *Thy prayers and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God: whereupon St. Peter inferred, That in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him, Acts x. 4. 35.*

Hence it is that we shall be judged and receive sentence at the last day according to our works. *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. For inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me, Matt. xxv. 34, &c.*

Lord, how do those look to be saved at that day, who think good works not required to salvation, and accordingly do them not! Can our Saviour pass this blessed sentence on them? think they he can? If he should, they might truly say indeed, 'Lord, we have done no such matter, nor did we think ourselves bound unto it; we relied wholly upon our faith in thy merits, and thought we had been freed from such services.' What? do they think Christ will change the form of his sentence at that great day? No certainly: if the sentence for bliss will not fit them, and be truly said of them; the other will, and must, for there is no more; *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: For when I was hungry, ye gave me no meat, &c. ver. 41.* This must be their doom, unless they suppose the righteous Judge will lie for them.

And it is here further to be observed, that *the works* named in this sentence of judgment are works of the second Table, and *works of mercy and charity*; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick; all alms-deeds, which men are now-a-days so much afraid of, as if they looked toward popery, and had a tang of meriting; for now-a-days these costly works of all others are most suspicious. But will it be so at the day of judgment? True it is, they *merit* not the reward which shall be given them: but what then? are we so proud we will do no works unless we may *merit*? Is it not sufficient that God will reward them for Christ's sake, though they have no worth in themselves? And thus much of the second motive why we should do good works,—Because howsoever they *merit* nothing, yet are they the means and way ordained by God to attain the reward of eternal life.

The third and last motive to works of righteousness is,—Because they are the only sign and note whereby we know our faith is true and saving, and not counterfeit. For, *if we say we have fellowship with Christ, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth, 1 John i. 6. Hereby we know that we know him (viz. to be our advocate with his Father, and the propitiation for our sins), if we keep his commandments, chap. ii. 3. Little children, let no man deceive you: He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as Christ is righteous, chap. iii. 7. The same al-*

most you may find again, chap. ii. 29. For if every one that believeth in Christ truly and savingly believes that salvation is to be attained by obedience to God in him, and not otherwise, and therefore embraceth and layeth hold upon him for that end; how can such a one's faith be fruitless? How can he be without works, who therefore lays hold on Christ that his works and obedience may be accepted as righteous before God for his sake, and so be rewardable? It is as possible for the sun to be without his light, or the fire to want heat, as such a faith to be without works.

Our Saviour therefore himself makes this a most sure and never-failing note to build our assurance of salvation upon, Luke ch. vi. where the mention of the words of my text gives the occasion, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, saith he, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock: but he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great,* ver. 46—49. Whom these three motives or reasons will not persuade to good works, let not my soul, O Lord, be joined with theirs, nor my doom be as theirs must be.

JOS. MEDE.

The Scripture is more diligent and more ample in teaching the Christian justified man obedience unto God and a virtuous life, than it is to shew us our salvation in Christ; and that is for this purpose only, that we should not by our licentious liberty receive the grace of God in vain. It is more easy for man to know the Gospel, than to follow the life of the Gospel. Another man may preach Christ, but the hearer must follow Christ. The science of the Scripture is practical and not speculative; it requireth a doer and not a speaker only. There be many that dissemble faith, and have a certain show of religion, when indeed in the inward man there is no faith at all. Let every man therefore search his own conscience, with

what faith he is endued, and remember that Christ said, *It is a strait way and narrow that leadeth to life, and but a few that walk therein,* Matt. vii. Therefore our only remedy is to pray for grace, and amend.

BP. HOOPER, (MARTYR.)

Now, are we come to the fourth error, where Rastall untruly reporteth on me, that I would persuade the people that good works done by any man in this world are nothing available unto him that doth them, and that it is no hurt nor hindrance unto any man, though he never do any. Because, I say, they justify not before God, therefore he thinketh, that other men would understand me as wisely as he doth, and argue that they are nothing available; but I must desire him to put on his spectacles and look again upon my book, and he shall find these words: 'Peradventure, thou wilt answer unto me, Shall I then do no good deeds? I answer, Yes: thou wilt answer me, Wherefore? I answer, Thou must do them because God hath commanded them. I answer, Thou art living in this world with men, and hast conversation with them, therefore hath God appointed thee what thou shalt do to the profit of thy neighbour and taming of thy flesh, as Paul testifieth: *We are his work in Christ Jesu, unto good works, which works God hath prepared that we should walk in them,* Eph. ii. These works God would have us do, that the unfaithful might see the godly and virtuous conversation of his faithful, and thereby be compelled to *glorify our Father which is in heaven,* Matt. v. and so are they both profitable unto thy neighbour, and also a testimony unto thee, by the which a man may know that thou art the right son of thy heavenly Father, and a very Christ unto thy neighbour: and after teacheth that we ought to do these works without having respect either to heaven or hell, but attending through charity the wealth of our neighbour &c.'

I wonder that Rastall is not ashamed to say that I would make them believe that they are not available; therefore, good reader, note my words: first, I say, we must do them, because God hath commanded them: is it not available to keep the commandments of God? Secondly, I say, that they are to the profit of thy neighbour: is it not available? Thirdly, I say, that they tame our flesh: is it not avail-

able? Fourthly, I say, they are the glory of God: is it not available? Fifthly, I say, they are a testimony to him that doth them, by the which men may know that he is the very son of God: is that not available? Belike, Rastall counteth nothing available, but that which justifieth before God; he will say the sun is not available, because it justifieth not, fire is not available in his eyes, because it justifieth not, &c.

JOHN FRITH, (MARTYR.)

No one can be more firmly convinced than I am, that it is impossible to insist with too much urgency, upon the indispensable necessity of good works, provided they occupy their proper relative position, and their necessity be placed on its legitimate foundation. With reference to God, they are commanded by him; and this constitutes a formal obligation on his creatures; *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* With reference to society, they are eminently conducive to its welfare, and may lead others to seek that grace from which they proceed; for we are enjoined *to let our light so shine before men, that they may by our good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.* With reference to the person who performs them, they are of essential importance, as fruits of faith, and evidences of his having an interest in the propitiation which the Lord Jesus Christ made for the sins of the world; for *hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* But this is not all: they are of importance to the individual, not only as evidences of his title to the future inheritance, but also as a test and criterion of his real state and character, and consequently, as evidences of his qualification for the future felicity. Where the internal tastes, dispositions, and habits, do not harmonise with the objects which will be presented to the disembodied spirit, when it enters upon a new state of existence, they render it morally incapable of deriving happiness from them.* If, therefore, the enjoyments

of the heavenly state be of a holy and spiritual nature, and if man, in consequence of his original corruption, be by nature destitute of any relish for such enjoyments, then, before he can be qualified for them, he must be sanctified, as well as justified—he must be renewed in the spirit of his mind, as well as have his sins remitted. But what are the proofs of this internal change? They are not only to be discovered by a reflex operation of the mind upon itself, but are likewise to be sought in the external conduct which ought to be characterised by an habitual conformity to the Divine will.

Good works, moreover, are of importance in another point of view, and that is because they tend to confirm and establish the motives from which they derive their existence. As it is the property of habits to produce acts, so, reciprocally, acts have a necessary tendency to invigorate habits. Every act of unbelief, of vindictiveness, of self-indulgence, on the one hand, strengthens the habit from which it originates; and, on the other, every exercise of faith, of love, of self-denial, produces a corresponding effect. The moral dispensations of the Deity are found, in this respect also, to be in unison with the fundamental principles of the human mind, when it is expressly declared, that *whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.*

Good works, lastly, are of immense importance, considered with reference to the gradation of future rewards. Justification admits of no degrees; for a man either is, or is not, absolutely pardoned. But there are degrees in sanctification; and, consequently, there must be degrees in the qualification for future happiness. Since good works also, which are the fruits of faith, are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and, according to his gracious promise, are the subjects of reward, those who have abounded most in

fore, as well as from Revelation, it may be inferred, that whatever has been the prevailing bent of the soul during its sojourn in the body, the same bent will be retained after it is removed to a new scene of existence. There is, consequently, sound philosophy in the remarks of Virgil, when he observes with regard to the shades of the heroes, whom Æneas saw when traversing the infernal regions,

Quæ gratia currûm,
Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos; eadem sequitur tellure repostas.

Æn. lib. vi. l. 653.

* Arguing upon principles of natural reason, Bishop Butler has justly observed, that "there is in every case a probability, that all things will continue as we experience they are, in all respects, except those in which we have some reason to think they will be altered." Upon these principles, there-

them are authorised by Scripture to anticipate the most abundant recompense. If he who improved the one pound which was deposited in his hands, by gaining ten more, was made ruler over ten cities; whilst he who added only five to his original stock, was placed over five cities: and if, further, the degrees of glory in a future state be compared to the different degrees of splendour inherent in the heavenly luminaries; then a most powerful motive is furnished to stimulate the Christian to excel in the practice of every virtue, and to inspire him with a laudable ambition of glorifying his heavenly Father by bringing forth much fruit.

In conclusion, I would observe, that Christianity is eminently a religion of motives, and that a true and lively faith in its essential doctrines, will give birth to motives, which, upon the soundest metaphysical principles, must necessarily influence the practice.* The facts which it discloses, the doctrines which it reveals, and the truths which it promulgates, are invested by faith with such a reality and substance as will produce, in all cases where faith is equally vigorous and lively, effects similar to those enumerated by St. Paul in the eleventh chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews.

The efficacy of a justifying faith is chiefly evinced in producing love—love to God and man. In this comprehensive principle is included, according to the tenor of our blessed Saviour's declaration, all that is written in the law or taught by the prophets. When, therefore, the existence of this principle is attested by works of piety towards God and benevolence towards man, the person in whom it dwells must previously have been

brought into a state of favour and reconciliation, and must, while he continues under its prevailing influence, be prepared for admission into the heavenly inheritance; where faith, having fulfilled its destined purpose, will be superseded by sight; where hope, having attained its wished-for object, will be changed into fruition; and where charity alone will remain the eternal inmate of the soul.

ARCHDEACON BROWNE.

How good Works are to be performed.

FIRST, we must do them out of faith in Christ, that is, relying upon him only for the acceptance and rewarding of them: for in him alone God is well pleased with us, and with what we do, and, therefore, *without faith*, and reliance upon him, *it is impossible to please God*. We must not think there is any worth in our works, for which any such reward as God hath promised, is due; for, alas! our best works are full of imperfections, and far short of what the law requires. Our reward, therefore, is not of merit, but out of the merciful promise of God, in Christ; which the apostle means, when he says, *we are saved by grace, and not by works*; that is, it is the grace and favour of God, in Christ, which makes ourselves acceptable, and our works rewardable, and not any desert in them, or us.

Having laid this foundation, the next thing required is *sincerity of heart* in doing them. We must do them out of the fear of God, and conscience of his commandments, not out of respect of profit, or fear, or praise of men, for such as do so are hypocrites. *Not every one*, saith our Saviour, *that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father*; now it is the will of our heavenly Father, that we serve him in truth and uprightness of heart: *I know*, saith David, 1 Chron. xxix. 17, *that thou my God triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness*. And so he said to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1, *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou upright*, or, be thou sincere. This manner of serving God, Joshua commended to the Israelites, *Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth*, Josh. xxiv. 14.; and the prophet Samuel, *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart*, 1 Sam. xii. 24. This sincerity, uprightness, and truth in God's service, is, when we do religious and pious duties, and abstain from the contrary, out

* That faith and practice are separable things, is a gross mistake, or rather a manifest contradiction. Practical holiness is the end, faith is the means; and to suppose faith and practice separable, is to suppose the end attainable without the use of means. The direct contrary is the truth. The practice of religion will always thrive in proportion as its doctrines are generally understood and firmly received; and the practice will degenerate and decay in proportion as the doctrine is misunderstood and neglected. It is true, therefore, that it is the great duty of a preacher of the Gospel to press the practice of its precepts upon the consciences of men. But then it is equally true, that it is his duty to enforce this practice in a particular way, namely, by inculcating its doctrines. The motives which the revealed doctrines furnish are the only motives he has to do with, and the only motives by which religious duty can be effectually enforced.—*Bishop Horsley's Charges*, p. 10.

of conscience to Godward, out of an heart possessed with the love and fear of God. It is otherwise called in Scripture, *perfectness*, or *perfectness of heart*; for it is a lame and imperfect service, where the better half is wanting, as the heart is, in every work of duty both to God and men. And therefore it is called *perfectness* when both go together, when conscience, as the soul, enlivens the outward work as a body. And, indeed, this is all the perfection we can attain unto in this life, 'to serve God in truth of heart,' though otherwise we come short of what we should; and, therefore, God esteems our actions and works, not according to the greatness or exactness of the performance, but according to the sincerity and truth of our hearts in doing them: as appears by the places I have already quoted, and by that where it is said, that though Asa failed in his reformation, and the *high places were not taken down; nevertheless, his heart was perfect with the Lord his God, all his days*, 1 Kings xv. 14.

A note to know such a sincerity and truth of heart by is, If in our privacy, when there is no witness but God and ourselves, we are careful then to abstain from sin, as well as in the sight of men: If when nobody but God shall see and know it, we are willing to do a good work, as well as if all the world should know it. He that findeth himself thus affected, his heart is true, at least in some measure; but so much the less, by how much he findeth himself the less affected in this manner. When we are in the presence and view of men, we may soon be deceived in ourselves, and think we do that out of conscience and fear of God, which indeed is but for the fear or praise of men, either lest we should be damified, or impair our credit, or the like. But when there is none but God and us, then to be afraid of sin and careful of good duties, is a sign we fear God in truth and sincerity, and not in hypocrisy.

The special and principal means to attain this sincerity and truth of heart is, To possess ourselves always with the apprehension of God's presence, and to walk before him as in his eye. Where-soever thou art, there is an eye that sees thee, an ear that hears thee, and a hand that registereth thy most secret thoughts: *For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings*, Prov. v. 21. How much ashamed

would we be, that men should know how much our hearts and our words and actions disagreed? How would we blush that men should see us commit this or that sin, or neglect this or that duty? What horrible atheism then doth this argue, that the presence of man, yea sometimes of a little child, should hinder us from that wickedness which God's presence cannot? This having of God before our eyes, and the continual meditation of his all-seeing presence, would, together with devout prayer for the assistance of God's grace, be in time the bane of hypocrisy and falsehood of heart, and beget instead thereof that truth and sincerity which God loveth.

Another property of such obedience as God requires is universality: we must not serve God by halves, by doing some duties and omitting others; but we must, with *David, have respect to all God's commandments*, Psal. cxix. 6, 20; to those of the second table as well as to those of the first, and to those of the first as well as those of the second. The want of which universality of obedience to both tables is so frequent, as the greatest part of Christians are plunged therein, to the undoubted ruin of their souls and shipwreck of everlasting life, if they so continue.

JOSEPH MEDE.

What it is that constitutes a good Work.

It may be of use to consider, what is essentially necessary to a good work. To constitute a good work, or one that is acceptable to God, it must be done from a right principle, performed by a right rule, and directed to a right end. It must be done from a right principle. This is the love of God. The great command of the unchangeable law is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*. Whatever work is done from any other principle, however it may be applauded by men, it is not acceptable in the sight of him who searches the heart. For *by him* principles, as well as *actions*, *are weighed*, 1 Sam. ii. 3. It must be performed by a right rule. This is the revealed will of God. His will is the rule of righteousness. The moral law in particular, is the rule of our obedience. It is a complete system of duty, and, considered as moral, is immutably the rule of our conduct. However chargeable, therefore, any work may be to him that performs it, or however diligent he may be in the performance of it, yet, if it be no where commanded by the authority of heaven, it

stands condemned by that divine query, *Who hath required this at your hands?* And though it be pretended, that the love of God is the *principle*, and the glory of God the *end*, as the dupes of superstition, both ancient and modern, have generally done; yet, being no where enjoined in our only rule of faith and practice, it is no better than reprobate silver, and will certainly be rejected of God, Jer. vi. 30. So that, however highly the performer may please himself, or gratify his own pride by the deed, he cannot be commended for his obedience. For where there is no command, explicit or implied, there can be no obedience; consequently, no good work. It must be directed to a right end. This is the glory of the supreme Being; *whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, is the peremptory command of the Most High, 1 Cor. x. 31. And as this is the end for which Jehovah himself acts, in all his works, both of providence and grace, so it is the highest end at which we can possibly aim. But no man can act for so sublime an end, but he that is taught of God, and fully persuaded that salvation is entirely by grace; so by grace, as to be detached from all works, dependent on no conditions to be performed by him. For, till then, he cannot but refer his supposed good actions principally to self, and his own salvation. This is the highest end for which such a person can possibly act, though other and baser ends are often proposed by him. But those works which are truly good, and which the Holy Spirit calls the *fruits of righteousness*, are, in the design of the performer, as well as in the event, *to the praise and glory of God*. Philip. i. 11. Now, though an unregenerate man may do those things which are materially good, and by a right rule, yet none who are ignorant of the Gospel of divine grace, can act from that generous principle, and for that exalted end, which are absolutely necessary to constitute a good work.

ABRAHAM BOOTH.

Our Good Works acceptable to God through Christ only.

As the persons of wicked men are hateful, so also all their performances are displeasing unto God: therefore it is said, *The Lord had respect to Abel, and to his offering*, Gen. iv. 4.; first to his person, and then to his service. If your persons be hateful to God, never expect that your

performances should be acceptable; and the reason is clear, because *there is but one way of acceptance for ourselves, and for our duties, and that is through Christ*. As the best are not in this life free from the remainders of sin, so neither are their best duties free from the mixtures of sin: now these sinful mixtures are so manifest unto God, that he must needs reject and abominate them, were it not that Christ, into whose hands they are first delivered, separates those mixtures, and fills up all their defects by the redundancy of his own merits. But the duties of wicked men are not so accepted in Christ: audacious and bold are they as to come before God without a Mediator to present them; and that God who is pleased with nothing but what is absolutely perfect, if not so in itself, yet at least in the mediation of his Son, seeing so many faults and flaws in the services of wicked men, cannot but cast them back as dung and filth in their faces; for God accepting of nothing but what is perfect, and *the services of wicked men wanting the merits of Jesus Christ*, they come up before God as unsavoury stench instead of sweet smells. This is the fruitless issue of all wicked men's duties; and therefore the Apostle tells us, *That without faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. xi. because *faith is that grace that unites and makes us one with Christ, and gives us an interest in those merits that alone can procure acceptance for ourselves and for our services*. But now wicked and unregenerate men have not this faith, and therefore nothing that they do is well pleasing unto God: they may for the good works that they do be rewarded possibly with temporal blessings, and certainly with the mitigation of future punishment; but the reward of eternal life belongs to none but to those whose services are accepted through Him to whom their persons are united. See here then the miserable shipwreck of all the hopes of carnal men, who regard not what they are, but look only, and that too with a too favourable eye, upon what they do, and with the boasting Pharisee make large inventories of their good works. They fast twice a week, and give alms often; they are frequent in prayer, and constant at the ordinances; and therefore they think certainly they shall enter into heaven with the forwardest: but alas, what is all this? *God respects what thou art as well as what thou dost; and if all your duties proceed from*

an unchanged, unrenewed heart, he neither accepts them, nor regards them. Thou perhaps thinkest thou hast laid up a great mass of treasure for thy soul against the time to come; whereas at the last day it will be found to be but great heaps of dung and filth: nay, let me tell you, should you pray till your knees took root in the earth, could you nail your eyes to heaven, could you melt your hearts into tears, and vanish away into sight, yea, and spend every moment of your lives far better than ever you spent the best, *and yet should you remain unsanctified and unchanged*, all this would be of no account with God; but, instead of an *Euge, Well done, good and faithful servant*, you would meet with that unexpected demand, *Who hath required these things at your hands? Consider seriously and sadly of this, you who think that you have many duties upon the file in heaven, as so many evidences of your right and title unto heaven*: why now, as you would not have all these to be lost, and utterly in vain, so *look to it that they proceed from hearts that are truly sanctified and renewed*, without which they will be of no avail at all in God's esteem. And so much for the demonstrations of this point.

BP. HOPKINS.

Good Works in no wise the cause of our Salvation.

THE error which prompts ignorant and foolish men to be inflated with a false and deceitful trust is, that they always place in works a cause of their salvation: whereas, if we refer to the four kinds of causes which in the producing of effects philosophers direct to be taken into consideration, we shall find that works answer to none of them in effecting our salvation. For the Scripture every where openly declares that the *efficient* cause of our obtaining salvation is the mercy and gratuitous love of our Heavenly Father towards us; but that the *material* cause is Christ, together with his obedience, whereby he hath purchased righteousness for us. And what can we say is the *formal* or *instrumental* cause, but faith? And these three our Lord comprehends in one passage, when he says, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Again, the Apostle testifies that the *final* cause is the shewing forth of the justice of God, and the praise of his good-

ness, where he also makes mention of the other three in clear terms. For he thus addresses the Romans, *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, but they are justified freely by his grace.* Here you have the fountain head, that God laid hold of, or embraced, us in his gratuitous mercy—He goes on, *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*—here you have as it were the material whereby justification is completed for us. *By faith in his blood*—here is shewn the instrumental cause whereby the righteousness of Christ is applied to us. Lastly, he subjoins the *end*, when he says, *to declare his righteousness that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* And to shew as he proceeds that this justice of God is consistent with reconciliation, he says expressly, that Christ was *set forth for a propitiation.* So in the first chap. to the Ephes. he teaches that we are received by God into favour through mere mercy; that that takes place by the intercession of Christ; is apprehended by faith; and that all is for this end, that the glory of the goodness of God may fully shine forth. Since we see that all the parts of our salvation thus stand *without* ourselves, in what respect can we now either trust or glory in works?

The most inveterate enemies of divine grace can raise no controversy with us regarding either the *efficient* or the *final* cause whereof we have spoken, except they should deny the whole of Scripture. They do make a kind of daub in the material and formal, as if our works held a place jointly with faith and the righteousness of Christ; but that also in the face of Scripture, which simply affirms that Christ is to us for righteousness, and for life, and that this benefit of righteousness is possessed by faith alone.

And whereas the saints not unfrequently feel themselves established and comforted by the remembrance of their own innocence and integrity, and even sometimes openly declare it, this comes to pass two ways; either because, by comparing their own good cause, with the bad cause of the wicked, they thence conceive an assurance of victory, not so much through any exaltation of their own righteousness, as through a just and merited condemnation of their adversaries; or because, independent of any comparison with others, whilst they reflect upon their state before God, the purity of their own conscience

affords them in some measure both consolation and confidence. The former reason we shall consider afterwards; regarding the latter we will now briefly explain how it may fully agree with what we have above laid down, namely, that in the judgment of God, there must be no secret reliance upon any trust in one's works, and no glorying through a high opinion of them.

The agreement therein is this; that the saints, when the question regardeth the foundation of their salvation, fix their eyes upon the goodness of God alone without respect to works. Nor do they only turn themselves to it as being the origin of all blessedness, but they take up their repose in it as being the fulness and completion thereof. The conscience having been thus grounded, raised up, and established, is also established in the view of its works, as far as they are evidences of God dwelling and ruling within us. Since then this trust in works cannot have any place except we have already cast the entire reliance of the soul upon the mercy of God, it ought not to appear contradictory to that estate whereupon it depends. Wherefore when we exclude trust in works, we would only that the mind of the Christian should not look to the merit of works, as any auxiliary towards his salvation, but should abide entirely in the free promise of righteousness. We do not however prohibit him from upholding and establishing this faith by any tokens of the goodwill of God towards him. For if the different gifts which God hath conferred upon us, when called to memory, are unto us like rays of the Divine countenance, whereby we are enlightened unto the contemplation of that most sublime light of goodness; much more so is the grace of good works, which shews that the Spirit of adoption has been imparted to us.

When therefore the saints confirm their faith from the innocency of their conscience, and take from thence occasion of rejoicing, they do no other than gather from the fruits of their calling, that they have been chosen by God into the place of sons. That then which Solomon declares, that *in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence*; that the saints sometimes make use of this appeal to be heard by the Lord, that they have walked before his face in uprightness and singleness; these have no place in laying a foundation for establishing the conscience; but are then only

of any avail when they are taken in an after place; both because that fear nowhere exists which can of itself establish a full confidence, and as to the integrity of which the saints are conscious, they are also conscious that many remains of the flesh are still intermingled with it; but inasmuch as from the fruits of their regeneration they fetch an argument of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, they thence greatly establish their minds to look for the help of God in all their necessities, since in so weighty a point they find him to be their Father. Nor can they however attain even to this except they have *first* laid hold of the goodness of God, sealed to them by no other certainty than that of the free promise; for if they set out to estimate it from their own good works, nothing will be more uncertain or more weak; since their works, if considered *by themselves*, will no less betoken the anger of God by their imperfection, than they will testify his favour by their purity, in whatever degree begun in them. Lastly, they so betoken the good-will of God, as nevertheless in no wise to divert us from the freeness of his grace and favour, in which, as the Apostle declares, is comprehended all length, and breadth, and depth, and height; as if he should say, Whithersoever the thoughts of Christians are turned, to whatever height they rise, however far and however wide they expand themselves, they ought not to go out of the love of Christ, but be, as it were, wholly taken up in contemplating it, for it comprehends infinity in all its dimensions. Therefore he saith that it exceeds and passeth all knowledge, and that, whilst we feel to how great a degree Christ hath loved us, we are filled with all the fulness of God. As elsewhere, when he boasts that the people of God are conquerors in every conflict, he straightway adds the reason thereof, *through him that loved them*.

We see then that the saints have no such reliance upon their works, as either ascribes any degree of merit to them, (inasmuch as they look upon them no otherwise than as gifts of God, from whence they may recognize his favour, and no other than signs of their calling, whence they may gather their own election,) or detracts in any respect from the full and free righteousness which we have in Christ, since it depends thereupon, and cannot subsist without it. Augustine expresses the same thing concisely and elegantly, when he

writes: 'I do not say to the Lord, despise not the works of *my* hands; I have sought out the Lord with *mine* hands, and am not deceived. No; I commend not the works of *mine* hands; for I fear lest when thou shalt look into them, thou shouldest find therein more sins than merits. This only do I say, this only do I ask, this only do I desire; despise not the work of *thine* hands. See thy work in me, not mine. For if thou shalt see mine, thou condemnest; if thou shalt see thine own, thou crownest. For even the good works, whatsoever are in me, are from thee.'

He lays down two reasons why he does not dare to vend his own works to God; because whatever he has of good works, he sees therein nothing of his own, and also because that again is overwhelmed by a multitude of sins. Whence it comes to pass that his conscience feels more fear and consternation therefrom, than it does confidence. Therefore his desire is that God should look upon his right deeds with no other view, than that recognising therein the grace of his *own* calling, he might perfect the work which *he* had begun.

But further, the Scripture represents the good works of believers as causes why the Lord blesses them. This then must be so understood as to leave unshaken what has been before laid down, that the *efficient* cause of our salvation is in the love of God the Father; the *material* in the obedience of God the Son; the *instrumental* in the illumination of God the Spirit, i. e. in faith; that the end or *final* cause is the glory of this so marvellous goodness of God. Now it is no contradiction thereto, that God should lay hold of our works as inferior causes. And how so? Because those whom through his mercy he has destined to the inheritance of eternal life, in his ordinary dealing he leads into the possession of it through good works. And he calls that which precedes in the order of the dispensation, the cause of that which follows after. On this principle he sometimes deduces eternal life from works; not that it is to be referred to them as its source, but since whomsoever he has chosen, he renders righteous, that he may eventually glorify them, the former grace, which is a step to that which follows, he in a measure makes the cause of it. But as often as the *true* cause is to be assigned, he does not direct us to betake ourselves to works, but to rest

in the contemplation of his mercy only. For what is it we are to learn from that expression of the Apostle, *the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life*? As he sets life in opposition to death, why does he not set righteousness in opposition to sin? As he states sin as the cause of death, why does he not so state righteousness as the cause of life? For thus the antithesis ought rightly to have been constructed, which by the above variation is interrupted. But the Apostle was desirous to express by that comparison the true state of the case, that death is *due* to the deserts of men, that life has its rise no where but in the sole *mercy* of God. Finally, in expressions of that nature, the order of things is rather adverted to than cause and effect; inasmuch as God, by accumulating graces upon graces, takes occasion from former gifts to follow them up by others, that he may omit nothing for the enriching of his servants; whilst however he so prosecutes his own course of liberality, his will is that we should always regard his free election as the fountain and source of all. For although he loveth the gifts which he daily confers upon us, inasmuch as they proceed from that fountain, yet it is our place to hold them by that tenure of free grace, which alone is able to support our souls; and whatever gifts of his Spirit he may subsequently vouchsafe us, so to connect under that first cause, that they may in no wise derogate from it.

CALVIN.

Indeed works are the fruits of Christian faith, and tokens, not causes, of salvation. Even as a tree that bringeth forth fruits; if the tree be good, it appeareth by the fruits, not because the fruit maketh the tree good, but because the tree maketh the fruit good. In like manner the deeds of the godly have nothing in themselves that may enable them to stand upright in judgment; but if they find any grace or reward, the same may not be ascribed to their own merit, but partly to mercy, partly to imputation, through the Son, that is the Redeemer: to mercy, I say, which doth forgive our evil deeds; to imputation, which accepteth our good works, though they be of themselves never so imperfect, as though they were perfect, and doth reward them with a crown of glory; so that the glory hereof is not now to be ascribed to men, but to God; not to righteousness, but to grace; not to works, but

to faith ; not to judgment, but to mercy. For confirmation whereof, if we seek for authority, who may require any one a more faithful witness, or of more approved authority, than the Apostle ? who being sent unto the Gentiles, as to his proper and peculiar charge, what doth he preach unto them ? *Not by the works which we have done*, saith he, *but for his mercy sake he hath saved us*. If words may obtain any credit with you, what can be spoken more plainly ? if the authority of the witness may prevail, what more assured testimony can be sought for than Paul, that speaketh himself ? JOHN FOX.

There have been great disputes one way and another, about the merit of good works ; but I truly think they who have laboriously engaged in them, have been very idly, though very eagerly, employed about nothing, since the more sober of the schoolmen themselves acknowledge there can be no such thing as meriting from the blessed God, in the human, or, to speak more accurately, in any created nature whatsoever : nay, so far from any possibility of merit, there can be no room for reward any otherwise than of the sovereign pleasure and gracious kindness of God ; and the more ancient writers, when they use the word merit, mean nothing by it but a certain correlate to that reward which God both promises and bestows of mere grace and benignity. Otherwise, in order to constitute what is properly called merit, many things must concur, which no man in his senses will presume to attribute to human works, though ever so excellent ; particularly, that the thing done must not previously be matter of debt, and that it be entire, or our own act, unassisted by foreign aid ; it must also be perfectly good, and it must bear an adequate proportion to the reward claimed in consequence of it. If all these things do not concur, the act cannot possibly amount to merit. Whereas I think no one will venture to assert, that any one of these can take place in any human action whatever. But why should I enlarge here, when one single circumstance overthrows all those titles ? The most righteous of mankind would not be able to stand, if his works were weighed in the balance of strict justice ; how much less then could they deserve that immense glory which is now in question ! Nor is this to be denied only concerning the unbeliever and the sinner, but concerning

the righteous and pious believer, who is not only free from all the guilt of his former impenitence and rebellion, but endowed with the gift of the Spirit. The interrogation here expresses the most vehement negation, and signifies that no mortal, in whatever degree he is placed, if he be called to the strict examination of divine Justice, without daily and repeated forgiveness, could be able to keep his standing, and much less could he arise to that glorious height. 'That merit,' says Bernard, 'on which my hope relies, consists in these three things—the love of adoption, the truth of the promise, and the power of its performance.' This is the threefold cord which cannot be broken.

LEIGHTON.

All Works and Virtues without Grace, leave the Heart in the same state of Sin.

THERE must be grace before any duty can be performed acceptably unto God. But now most men pervert and disturb this method : and the ordinary way of disturbance is this ; they are frequent in duties, but they perform them not either for grace, or from grace ; neither that they may attain grace by them, nor that they may exercise grace in them : and yet, notwithstanding, these men think and hope to work out salvation by such duties as these are, making a leap from duties to salvation, neglecting to obtain that grace that can make their duties acceptable and saving ; and hence it is that they make no quicker dispatch and riddance in their great work. Now such attempts as these are,

First, *discouraging and disheartening*. And,

Secondly, *they are vain and fruitless*.

First, *they are very discouraging*. Duties never flow freely from the soul where grace is not like a continual fountain to supply it. Job, speaking of the hypocrite, asks this question, xxxvii. 10. *Will he delight himself in God ? will he always call upon him ?* No, he will not. It is not possible that he should do so, though for a time he may drive at a high rate, praying both with fervency and affection, yet will he soon decay and faint, because he hath no life of grace to carry him through duties ; but he finds them to flow stubbornly from him, and therefore through weariness and discontent at last he gives them over. The good works of graceless persons may be as flourishing as if indeed they were true saints ;

but they have a root to supply them; *the root of the matter*, as Job speaks, *is not in them*, and therefore they are soon nipped, and fade away. It is simply impossible that a person, without the life and power of grace, should persevere in a cordial, affectionate performance of good works; interest, credit, respect, and natural conscience, are too weak wheels for so great a burden; it is grace only that can over-balance all outward discouragements; yea, and which is more, that alone can remove all inward also: this can make obedience sweet to a child of God, which to a wicked man must needs be irksome, and that because he hath no relish in them, *Thou savorest not the things that are of God*, Matt. xvi. 23. This may be much more said of graceless persons, because *they have no salt in them*, for so grace is called, that should make holy and heavenly things to be savory to them. What a torment is it to be still chewing an unsavory prayer and an unsavory meditation; to hear and speak those words that their ears cannot relish! 'Must I always,' says the sinner, 'offer this force to myself? Must I still strain and pump for tears and sighs? Were holiness as easy to me as it is to some, no life would I choose sooner than that; but I am straitened and pinched up, and all good things come out of me like the evil spirit, which rends and tears me, and is a torture and anguish to my heart and bowels:' and it is so, because in the performance of them there is a neglect of that grace that should make duties become easy, and therefore such a one will shortly give over duties themselves, which he finds to be so troublesome, yea, and also give over all hopes of attaining any good at all by them.

Secondly, *such works are also, as to the obtaining of the last and main end, vain and fruitless*, and that upon two accounts.

1. *Because the acting of grace is the life and spirit of all our works*, without which they are all but carcasses and dead things, and only equivocally called good works, even as the *picture* of a man may be called a man. *We are*, says the Apostle, *his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*. As after the *first creation* God took a survey of all the works of his hands, and pronounced them all very good, so there is no work of ours that God will pronounce to be a good work, but what is the effect of his creating

power; that is, the product of his second creation: *created*, says the Apostle, *to good works*, Eph. ii. 10. Good works are no otherwise necessary to salvation, but as they are the exercises of grace, by which we express the life and likeness of God; so only are they necessary unto salvation. How should grace be seen and known but by works? First, God imprinted his own image upon our souls in regeneration, and stamps us feature for feature, grace for grace, and glory for glory: but now because this is hid and concealed, therefore are we to copy forth this image in a holy conversation, and to express every grace in some duty or work of obedience or other. As those that we call *falling stars* dart from heaven, and draw after them long trains of light, so God would have us to shoot up to heaven, but yet to leave a train of light behind us. Our graces must shine always; we must go on in good works, and these good works are of no value or account with God, of which grace is not the end or principle. What says the Apostle? *Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Can a man bestow all his goods upon the poor, and not be charitable? Indeed the word that we translate *charity*, might, for the avoiding of some mistakes, better have been translated *love*; but, however, we must take *charity* for a disposition to relieve the wants and necessities of others with respect of *love* to God and his image; if this good work be not from grace through a principle of *love* to God and obedience to his command, it is but the empty shell and husk of a good work, and it avails a man nothing. Yea, further, if after this, *I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*; if my soul burn not as clear and bright in *love*, as my *body* in the flames, it availeth me nothing, I burn only what was dead before, and offer a carcass instead of a sacrifice. There is no work or duty how specious soever, that is of any profit to the soul, if that work or duty hath not the life and power of some grace or other expressed in it. Well then, this is the first ground why works without grace are fruitless, because they are empty and lifeless. Grace is the life and spirit of good works.

2. All works and duties whatever without grace leave the heart in the same estate of sin, and therefore the person in

the same estate of wrath and condemnation as before. For,

First, all of them are not a sufficient expiation for the guilt of any one sin. Should such men pray and sigh till their breath were turned into a cloud, and covered the face of the whole sky; should they weep till they drowned themselves in their own tears, yet if all this could be supposed to be only the remorse of nature, and not true and godly sorrow, they would still be under the same state of condemnation as the most seared sinner in the world. The Prophet Micah tells of some that bade very high for pardon and forgiveness, as if they were resolved to carry it at any rate whatever. *Wherewith, say they, shall we come before the Lord and bow ourselves before the Most High God? Shall we come before him with burnt-offerings, and with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, and with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall we give our first-born for our transgressions, the fruit of our bodies for the sin of our souls?* Micah vi. 6, 7. What high rates are here bidden, and yet all this falls short! There is but one grace, and that is *faith*, that can give us a right and title to that righteousness that shall be a sufficient expiation and atonement for all our sins.

Secondly, all attainments and attempts, all endeavours and duties, without grace, can never mortify and subdue the power and dominion of any one lust or corruption. Men may divert, and chain, and restrain their corruptions, and impale in their lusts, so that they shall not break forth into any outrageous wickedness; but yet without grace they can never subdue them, because it is grace alone that can lay the axe to the root of this evil tree. Well, then, notwithstanding all that hath been said concerning the power of nature, what men may do thereby, and how far they may go, yet here you see what impotency there is in nature without grace, and what it cannot reach to perform. But now this is not spoken that hereby any should be discouraged from working, and because some doubt of the truth of their graces, that therefore they should desist from a course of holiness and obedience; this were plainly to thwart the whole design of this subject: no, all that hath been said is, to persuade men not to rest satisfied in any work of obedience or religion, in which some grace is not breathed or exercised,

nor to look upon them at all as inductive to salvation as in themselves, but as in reference to true grace. How many poor souls are there, who, because they run on in a round of duties, because they do something that they call good works, think that salvation is as surely their own, as if all the promises in the Scripture were sealed and delivered to them by God himself! And yet, poor creatures, never examine or regard from what principle this their obedience flows, whether from a principle of grace, or from the old corrupt principle of nature, new-vamped from some new operations of the common spirit. Believe it, this is not that obedience that God requires, nor that he will accept; an inward *groan*, if breathed by grace, is of more account with God, and will be more available to the soul than the most pompous and specious services of unregenerate men. What is it to God, when you offer not only the blind and the lame, but the dead also? Is it not rather an abomination than obedience? The Apostle tells us, *without works faith is dead*, James iii. 20. And it is as true on the other side also, that works without faith and other graces of the Spirit, are not only dead, but rotten and noisome. Every duty men perform in a graceless state and condition, God must needs loath it and them for it; *the prayer of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord*, Prov. xxviii. 9. It is as hateful unto God, as vapours that ascend up out of tombs, from putrefied bodies, are unto us. What then? Must such persons give up themselves to sin therefore? God forbid! No, rather let such think thus; if our duties and our righteousness be so loathsome, what are our sins and iniquities? Though every sinner be *dead in sins and trespasses*, yet is it less offensive to have a dead carcass embalmed than to have it lie open. Still therefore continue working, but in your working, first aim at the obtaining of grace, before you aim at the obtaining of heaven and salvation; let it at no time content you that such and such duties you have performed, but look what grace have you acted in them; what is there of God breathing in this prayer that I now put up? How am I in hearing, in meditation, in discoursing of the things of God? Is my heart holy and spiritual? Are my affections pure and fervent? Are my graces active and vigorous? And are they vigorous in this work

of obedience? Else to perform duties, and to neglect grace, that alone can enable us to perform duties acceptably, is only to go to hell a little more cleanly.

BP. HOPKINS.

Merely human virtues, whether considered in the heathen philosophers, or in such as by the world are called worthy people, are indeed fine flowers, but they have a worm within them. Whatever has not grace for its principle, whatever is not of faith, and is done without love to God, without a reference to him, but with a view to ourselves only, is a dead work in the sight of God.

Yet how many people have been, and are still deceiving themselves in this point.

The heathen sages, undoubtedly, believed themselves possessed of exquisite and solid virtues; they did not suspect that their hearts were deceitful, and their virtues spurious. How many of such as are called Christians possess heathen virtues only, without being aware of it, without being willing to suspect their hearts of imposing on them! Human virtues are like false coin, which is good in appearance, and indebted for its currency to the misery of mankind. But, is it not astonishing, that not those only among whom this false coin is circulated, take it for genuine; but even those who coined it are so much blinded, as to esteem and look upon it as sterling?

SUPERVILLE.

SECTION XVI.—ON THE FUTURE STATE.

The Assurance of a Future Judgment.

THAT there is a judgment to come after this life, will appear demonstrable, whether we consider ourselves who are to undergo it, or God who is to execute it. If we do but reflect upon the frame and temper of our own spirits, we cannot but collect and conclude from thence, that we are to give an account of our actions, and that a judgment hereafter is to pass upon us. There is in the soul of every man a conscience, and wheresoever it is, it giveth testimony to this truth. The antecedent or directive conscience tells us what we are to do, and the subsequent or reflexive conscience warns us what we are to receive. Looking back upon the actions we have done, it either approves or condemns them: and if it did no more, it would only prove that there is a judgment in this life, and every man his own judge. But seeing it doth not only allow and approve our good actions, but also doth create a complacency, apology, and confidence in us; seeing it doth not only disprove and condemn our evil actions, but doth also constantly accuse us, and breed a fearful expectation and terror in us; and all this pre-scinding from all relation to any thing either to be enjoyed or suffered in this life: it followeth that this conscience is not so much a judge as a witness, bound over to give testimony, for or against us, at some judgment after this life to pass upon us. For all men are *a law unto themselves*, and

have the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, Rom. ii. 14.

Again; if we consider the God who made us, and hath full dominion over us, whether we look upon him in himself or in his word, we cannot but expect a judgment from him. First; if we contemplate God in himself, we must acknowledge him to be the Judge of all mankind, so that a man shall say, *Verily he is a God that judgeth the earth*. Now the same God who is our Judge is, by an attribute necessary and inseparable, just; and this justice is so essential to his Godhead, that we may as well deny him to be God, as to be just. It was a rational expostulation which Abraham made, *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Gen. xviii. 25. We may therefore infallibly conclude that God is a most just Judge; and if he be so, we may as infallibly conclude that after this life he will judge the world in righteousness. For as the affairs of this present world are ordered, though they lie under the disposition of Providence, they show no sign of an universal justice. The wicked and disobedient persons are often so happy, as if they were rewarded for their impieties; the innocent and religious often so miserable, as if they were punished for their innocency. Nothing more certain than that in this life rewards are not

correspondent to the virtues, punishments not proportionable to the sins, of men. Which consideration will enforce one of these conclusions; either that there is no Judge of the actions of mankind; or if there be a Judge, he is not just, he renders no proportionate rewards or punishments; or, lastly, if there be a Judge, and that Judge be just, then is there a judgment in another world, and the effects thereof concern another life. Seeing then we must acknowledge that there is a Judge, which judgeth the earth; seeing we cannot deny but God is that Judge, and all must confess that God is most just; seeing the rewards and punishments of this life are no way answerable to so exact a justice as that which is divine must be; it followeth that there is a judgment yet to come, in which God will show a perfect demonstration of his justice, and to which every man shall in his own bosom carry an undeniable witness of all his actions.

BP. PEARSON.

Necessity for Believing a Future Punishment.

It is necessary to profess faith in Christ as Judge of the quick and the dead, for the strengthening of our hope, for the augmenting of our comfort, for the establishing of our assurance of eternal life. If we look upon the judgment to come only as revealing our secrets, as discerning our actions, as sentencing our persons according to the works done in the flesh, there is not one of us can expect life from that tribunal, or happiness at the last day. We must confess that we have all sinned, and that there is not any sin which we have committed but deserves the sentence of death; we must acknowledge that the best of our actions bear no proportion to eternity, and can challenge no degree of that weight of glory; and therefore in a judgment, as such, there can be nothing but a fearful expectation of eternal misery, and an absolute despair of everlasting happiness. It is necessary therefore that we should believe that Christ shall sit upon the throne, that our Redeemer shall be our Judge, that we shall receive our sentence not according to the rigour of the law, but the mildness and mercies of the Gospel; and then we may look upon not only the precepts but also the promises of God; whatsoever sentence in the sacred Scripture speaketh any thing of hope; whatsoever

text administereth any comfort; whatsoever argument drawn from thence can breed in us any assurance, we may confidently make use of them all in reference to the judgment to come; because by that Gospel which contains them all we shall be judged. If we consider whose Gospel it is, and who shall judge us by it, *we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;—for which cause he is not ashamed to call us brethren*, Eph. v. 30; Heb. ii. 11. As one of our brethren, he hath redeemed us, he hath laid down his life as a ransom for us. He is our High Priest, who made an atonement for our sins, *a merciful and faithful High Priest in all things, being made like unto his brethren*. He who is Judge is also our Advocate; and who shall condemn us, if he shall pass the sentence upon us, who maketh intercession for us? well therefore may *we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him* unto the throne of that Judge, who is our brother, who is our Redeemer, who is our High Priest, who is our Advocate, who will not by his word at the last day condemn us, because he hath already in the same word absolved us, saying, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life*, John v. 24. BP. PEARSON.

The Eternity of Future Punishment.

The wicked are to go into outer darkness; there is to be weeping and gnashing of teeth; they are to depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; there they shall drink of the wrath of God, poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation. Whatever there may be of figure in some of these expressions, as much as this they certainly import,—that the future state of the wicked will be a state of exquisite torment, both of body and mind,—of torments, not only intense in degree, but incapable of intermission, cure, or end,—a condition of unmixed and perfect evil, not less deprived of future hope than of present enjoyment.

It is amazing that a danger so strongly set forth should be disregarded; and this is the more amazing, when we take a view of the particular casts and complexions of

character among which this disregard is chiefly found. They may be reduced to three different classes, according to the three different passions by which they are severally overcome,—ambition, avarice, and sensuality. Personal consequence is the object of the first class; wealth, of the second; pleasure, of the third. Personal consequence is not to be acquired but by great undertakings, bold in the first conception, difficult in execution, extensive in consequence. Such undertakings demand great abilities. Accordingly, we commonly find in the ambitious man a superiority of parts, in some measure proportioned to the magnitude of his designs: it is his particular talent to weigh distant consequences, to provide against them, and to turn every thing, by a deep policy and forecast, to his own advantage. It might be expected that this sagacity of understanding would restrain him from the desperate folly of sacrificing an unfading crown for that glory that must shortly pass away. Again, your avaricious money-getting man is generally a character of wonderful discretion. It might be expected that he would be exact to count his gains, and would be the last to barter possessions which he might hold for ever, for a wealth that shall be taken from him, and shall not profit him in the day of wrath. Then, for those servants of sin, the effeminate sons of sensual pleasure, these are a feeble, timid race. It might be expected that these, of all men, would want firmness to brave the danger. Yet so it is; the ambitious pursues a conduct which must end in shame; the miser, to be rich now, makes himself poor for ever; and the tender, delicate voluptuary shrinks not at the thought of endless burnings!

These things could not be, but for one of these two reasons,—either that there is some lurking incredulity in men—*an evil heart of unbelief*, that admits not the Gospel doctrine of punishment in its full extent; or, that their imaginations set the danger at a prodigious distance.

The Scriptures are not more explicit in the threatenings of wrath upon the impenitent, than in general assertions of God's forbearance and mercy. These assertions are confirmed by the voice of nature, which loudly proclaims the goodness as well as the power of the universal Lord. Man is frail and imperfect in his original constitution. This, too, is the doctrine of the

Scriptures; and every man's experience unhappily confirms it. Human life, by the appointment of Providence, is short. *He hath made our days as it were a span long.* 'Is it, then, to be supposed, that this good, this merciful, this long-suffering God, should doom his frail, imperfect creature man to endless punishment, for the follies,—call them, if you please, the crimes, of a short life? Is he injured by our crimes, that he should seek this vast revenge; or does his nature delight in groans and lamentations? It cannot be supposed. What revelation declares of the future condition of the wicked, is prophecy; and prophecy, we know, deals in poetical and exaggerated expressions.' Such, perhaps, is the language which the sinner holds within himself, when he is warned of the wrath to come; and such language he is taught to hold, in the writings and the sermons of our modern sectaries. He is taught, that the punishment threatened is far more heavy than will be executed: he is told, that the words which, in their literal meaning, denote endless duration, are, upon many occasions, in Scripture, as in common speech, used figuratively or abusively, to denote very long, but yet definite, periods of time. These notions are inculcated in the writings, not of infidels, but of men who, with all their errors, must be numbered among the friends and advocates of virtue and religion;—but, while we willingly bear witness to their worth, we must not the less strenuously resist their dangerous innovations.

The question concerning the eternity of punishment (like some others, which, considered merely as questions of philosophy, may be of long and difficult discussion) might be brought to a speedy determination, if men, before they heat themselves with argument, would impartially consider how far Reason, in her natural strength, may be competent to the inquiry. I do not mean to affirm generally that Reason is not a judge in matters of religion: but I do maintain, that there are certain points concerning the nature of the Deity, and the schemes of Providence, upon which Reason is dumb and revelation is explicit; and that, in these points, there is no certain guide but the plain, obvious meaning of the written Word. The question concerning the eternal duration of the torments of the wicked is one of these. From any natural knowledge that we have of

the Divine character, it never can be proved that the scheme of eternal punishment is unworthy of him.

It cannot be proved that this scheme is inconsistent with his natural perfections,—his essential goodness. What is essential goodness? It is usually defined by a single property,—the love of virtue for its own sake. The definition is good, as far as it goes; but is it complete? Does it comprehend the whole of the thing intended? Perhaps not. Virtue and vice are opposites: love and hate are opposites. A consistent character must bear opposite affections toward opposite things. To love virtue, therefore, for its own sake, and to hate vice for its own sake, may equally belong to the character of essential goodness; and thus, as virtue in itself, and for its own sake, *must* be the object of God's love and favour; so, incurable vice, in itself, and for its own sake, *may* be the object of his hatred and persecution.

Again, it cannot be proved that the scheme of eternal punishment is inconsistent with the relative perfections of the Deity—with those attributes which are displayed in his dealings with the rational part of his creation: for who is he that shall determine in what proportions the attributes of justice and mercy, forbearance and severity, ought to be mixed up in the character of the Supreme Governor of the universe? Nor can it be proved that eternal punishment is inconsistent with the schemes of God's moral government: for who can define the extent of that government? Who among the sons of men hath an exact understanding of its ends—a knowledge of its various parts, and of their mutual relations and dependencies? Who is he that shall explain by what motives the righteous are to be preserved from falling from their future state of glory? That they shall not fall, we have the comfortable assurance of God's word. But by what means is the security of their state to be effected? Unquestionably by the influence of moral motives upon the minds of free and rational agents. But who is so enlightened as to foresee what particular motives may be the fittest for the purpose? Who can say, These might be sufficient,—these are superfluous? Is it impossible that among other motives, the sufferings of the wicked may have a salutary effect? And shall God spare the wicked, if the preservation of the righteous

should call for the perpetual example of their punishment?—Since, then, no proof can be deduced, from any natural knowledge that we have of God, that the scheme of eternal punishment is unworthy of the Divine character,—since there is no proof that it is inconsistent either with the natural perfections of God, or with his relative attributes,—since it may be necessary to the ends of his government,—upon what grounds do we proceed, when we pretend to interpret, to qualify, and to extenuate the threatenings of holy writ?

The original frailty of human nature, and the providential shortness of human life, are alleged to no purpose in this argument. Eternal punishment is not denounced against the frail, but against the hardened and perverse; and life is to be esteemed long or short, not from any proportion it may bear to eternity (which would be equally none at all, though it were protracted to ten thousand times its ordinary length), but according as the space of it may be more or less than may be just sufficient for the purposes of such a state as our present life is, of discipline and probation. There must be a certain length of time, the precise measure of which can be known to none but God, within which, the promises and the threatenings of the Gospel, joined with the experience which every man's life affords of God's power and providence—of the instability and vanity of all worldly enjoyments,—there must, in the nature of things, be a certain measure of time, within which, if at all, this state of experience, joined with future hopes and fears, must produce certain degrees of improvement in moral wisdom and in virtuous habit. If, in all that time, no effect is wrought, the impediment can only have arisen from incurable self-will and obstinacy. If the ordinary period of life be more than is precisely sufficient for this trial and cultivation of the character, those characters which shall show themselves incorrigibly bad, will have no claim upon the justice or the goodness of God, to abridge the time of their existence in misery, so that it may bear some certain proportion to the short period of their wicked lives. Qualities are not to be measured by duration: they bear no more relation to it than they do to space. The hatefulness of sin is seated in itself—in its own internal quality of evil: by that its

ill-deservings are to be measured,—not by the narrowness of the limits, either of time or place, within which the good providence of God hath confined its power of doing mischief.

If, on any ground, it were safe to indulge a hope that the suffering of the wicked may have an end, it would be upon the principle adopted by the great Origen, and by other eminent examples of learning and piety which our own times have seen,—that the actual endurance of punishment in the next life will produce effects to which the apprehension of it in this had been insufficient, and end, after a long course of ages, in the reformation of the worst characters. But the principle that this effect is possible—that the heart may be reclaimed by force, is at best precarious; and the only safe principle of human conduct is the belief, that unrepented sin will suffer endless punishment hereafter.

Perhaps, the distance at which imagination sets the prospect of future punishment may have a more general influence in diminishing the effect of God's merciful warnings, than any sceptical doubts about the intensity or the duration of the sufferings of the wicked. The Spirit of God means to awaken us from this delusion, when he tells us, by the Apostles and holy men of old, that the *coming of the Lord draweth nigh*. He means, by these declarations, to remind every man that his particular doom is near: for, whatever may be the season appointed in the secret counsels of God, for *that great and terrible day, when the heavens and the earth shall flee from the face of him who shall be seated on the throne, and their place shall be no more found*,—whatever may be the destined time of this public catastrophe, the end of the world, with respect to every individual, takes place at the conclusion of his own life. In the grave there will be no repentance; no virtues can be acquired—no evil habits thrown off. With that character, whether of virtue or of vice, with which a man leaves the world, with that he must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. In that moment, therefore, in which his present life ends, every man's future condition becomes irreversibly determined. In this sense, to every one that standeth here *the coming of the Lord draweth nigh,—the Judge is at the door; let us watch, therefore, and pray;—*

watch over ourselves, and pray for the succours of God's grace, that we may be able to stand before the Son of man. Nor shall vigilance and prayer be ineffectual. On the incorrigible and perverse,—on those who mock at God's threatenings, and reject his promises,—on these only the severity of wrath will fall. But, for those who lay these warnings seriously to heart—who dread the pollution of the world, and flee from sin as from a serpent—who fear God's displeasure more than death, and seek his favour more than life, though much of frailty will to the last adhere to them, yet these are the objects of the Father's mercy—of the Redeemer's love. For these he died,—for these he pleads,—these he supports and strengthens with his Spirit,—these he shall lead with him triumphant to the mansions of glory, when Sin and Death shall be cast into the lake of fire.

BR. HORSLEY.

I know some have denied a local hell. But it is very clear from Scripture: *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels*; i. e. depart from the place where I am, into that where the devil and his angels are to be. And again, the devils besought our Saviour *that he would not command them to go out into the deep*, or, as it is in the original, into the abyss. It appears then that the bad go from this world, where there is only a mixture of evils, into a scene of mere misery, horror, and torment. If God, who delights to communicate happiness to as many beings as the universe can conveniently hold, has, in pursuance of this scheme, filled every beautiful and agreeable province in it with creatures susceptible of felicity in the pursuit of virtue and perfection; the necessary consequence is, that those creatures who have disqualified themselves for happiness, must be condemned to dismal and uncomfortable mansions; from which, probably, after the last adjustment of things, there will be no outlet nor possibility of making an inroad upon the rest of the creation. There will be a congruity between the nature of the place, and that of the inhabitants, which will settle them there: and every one, like Judas, must go to his own place. It is idle to dispute whether the fire denounced against the unrelenting be metaphorical or real. Suppose it a metaphor; yet those metaphors

which represent things of another world, do not generally exceed the originals, or the reality of the things designed to be shadowed out by them.

The ingredients of future punishment are partly positive, and partly the natural consequences of bad actions, viz. appetites ever craving and clamorous, but ever unsatisfied; *tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doth evil*: an eternal banishment from the blessed presence of God and the society of angels, and *just men made perfect*; and a confinement to the company of malicious spirits, an everlasting torment to themselves, and ever tormenting all about them.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? our Saviour cried out, when he felt only a momentary and partial eclipse of the light of the Divine Countenance. But when a deep and genuine despair saddens the scenes all around, without the least beam of light from any point of heaven, then—I was going to describe the misery. But if words can paint this night-piece of horror, the copy must be drawn by those whose unhappiness it will be to be too well acquainted with the original. Here *the body pressed down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle the mind, that mused upon many things*: but when the soul shall be clothed with refined matter, which will not encumber her in her operations, her whole duration will be one continued stretch of thought, without any pause or intermission. And what a misery must it be to be thinking still, and yet to have little or nothing to think on but endless misery? To be at once deprived of all sensual delights, and cut off from the enjoyment of rational and substantial bliss, is a misery that we cannot now conceive, and, may we never feel!

REV. JER. SEED.

The General Unbelief of Future Punishment.

IN one point, and that too of infinite moment, the unbelief of men is palpable. Where is the man who duly and fully believes that the punishments of hell are eternal? They are so believed indeed by real Christians, who rely on the Saviour that delivered them *from the wrath to come*. And this shows the importance of that awful truth. For how can men believe in, and worthily receive, Jesus Christ, as delivering them from the wrath to come, if

they neither believe the reality of that wrath, nor feel that they are justly obnoxious to it? In truly humbling the mind, and bringing it to a hearty acquiescence in the justice of the Divine decrees herein; and in deeply impressing this same awful truth, lies no small part of that work of God's Holy Spirit, which *casteth down imaginations and every high thing that exalleth itself against the knowledge of God*. But when men begin really to think of the subject, what enmity, what hardness of heart, what pride, what impatience is felt in the soul! Perhaps, did the passions and prejudices of men stand as much in their way, on the point of eternal happiness, it might be found that they really believe as little of life eternal as they do of everlasting punishment.—Yet whether they believe it or not, both are described by the same lips of unerring Truth in one verse, *These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal*. But men have no objection to be eternally happy, though little knowing in what that happiness consists; and when something of its real excellent nature is laid before them, they are ready to call it foolishness; so far are they from believing what is revealed concerning it.

To a man wedded to his vices, what a prodigious, but false relief is it to think,—if he can persuade himself to think so,—that it is possible he may shun the worm that dieth not, and the fire that shall not be quenched. Under this notion how does the depraved spirit feel itself at ease in a course of sin! How charitable, and noble, and liberal does this plan seem, which delivers a man from slavish fear of punishment, and allows him to practise sin without terror, though it insults the majesty and holiness of God! Then he has attained what many call true liberty of soul. How in our times has this spirit grown to its height! If the depression and contempt of the clergy were the only bad consequence of it, we ought to bear them with patience. But precious souls are, in this way, ruined to eternity. For let it be remembered that our Saviour in Mark ix. six times expressly asserts the eternity of hell torments; and thence infers the duty and necessity of cutting off the hand and foot, and plucking out the eye that offends. If it be not true, what shall we say of him who has told us so? Poor wretched sinner! thy hope of being saved

in thy sins is vain ; as vain, as it is to hope that Christ, the eternal Truth, shall prove false in what he has said ! Despair then of this hope, and seek, through his grace, to mortify thy vices.

REV. JOS. MILNER.

Eternal Punishment not inconsistent with the Divine Perfections.

THE rejection of eternal punishment from the Christian system, is not because that opinion hath no place in the Bible, but because it is conceived to be unfriendly to the Divine Perfections. It is our business to shew that it is not unfriendly to them.

1. In the doctrine of eternal punishment there is nothing contrary to the power of God. It hath been confidently asserted, that it is impossible for any creature to live in eternal torments : and the language of the wicked in Isaiah, xxxiii. 14, *Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* for want of better proof, hath been alleged in support of it. But is it modest to deny that the same *mighty God can establish sinners for correction*, Habak. i. 12, who once preserved his servants in the flame of a fiery furnace ? May not the wicked, like the bush in Mount Horeb, which, though burning, was not consumed, by a supernatural provision be made to exist for ever in hell ?

2. But, though men are willing to limit the Divine Power, they are very jealous of the Divine liberty, which is represented as infringed, unless God hath a right of revoking or executing the sentences of his judgment. Not to say, that it is too late to argue from the liberty of a perfect Being, when his purpose is declared,—and that this attribute must be considered as in concert with his unchangeableness and his veracity,—this argument, if pursued, would lead us to deny the probability of any punishment. If God be free to reduce the sufferings of eternity to the sufferings of a thousand years, he is equally free to reduce them to the sufferings of an hour, or altogether to abolish them. The latter would be most consistent with the modern fond notions of tenderness and philanthropy. To the moral perfections of God, however, and not to his power and liberty, the cause we espouse is considered as most injurious.

3. To the veracity of God, indeed, it is evidently most friendly. Of this perfec-

tion the partisans of the contrary opinion are the violators. Analogical reasoning from man to God hath never been more unworthily and unhappily employed than here. Because impetuous and ignorant beings may find it necessary to omit the execution of their threatenings, or, as it is gently expressed, may be better than their word, such a conduct has been considered as no impeachment of the Divine faithfulness. It is a sufficient answer to this representation, that *the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent*, 1 Sam. xv. 29. To say that God may be better than his word, is saying neither more nor less than that his word is not true. And to expect any thing from Jesus Christ which is not contained in his covenant, is, in fact, to renounce the Gospel.

4. The purity of God is another attribute which the assertors of eternal misery will be allowed to defend.

The Holy Spirit suggests to us the most striking conceptions of the purity of Jehovah. In his sight the heavens are not clean, Job xv. 15. But familiar with the practice of sin, and under the imperceptible influence of infidelity, we debase in our ideas this glorious attribute, and forget that sin is utterly abominable and accursed before God. When Isaiah, vi. 5, felt the impression of the Divine purity, as celebrated by the seraphim, how hateful did he appear in his own eyes. Nay, such is the holiness of the King of saints, that he doth not spare the minute offences of his servants. Though their sins are pardoned by the blood of the everlasting covenant, yet, as in the case of David, they must experience the bitter effects of them. *The tribulations they endure are a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God*, 1 Thess. i. 4, 5. and his hatred of sin. In his moral government of the world, he doth not interpose to prevent certain natural consequences which he hath annexed to the visitations of his law. *Judgment, says Saint Peter, begins at the house of God ; and if it first begin with us, what shall be the end of them who obey not the Gospel of God?* 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. *And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* How can God look with any degree of favour upon those who have died, and who are unalterably fixed, in the habits of sin ? Now this is the case of all the inhabitants

of hell. They have contracted a moral incapacity of amendment; and in consequence of their own obstinate depravity, which would never submit to the proffered grace of the Gospel, they will continue for ever the enemies of God, subject to those sinful qualities and dispositions which they have formed here, and which are directly opposite to the perfection and holiness of the Divine Nature. Such views as these of the purity of God, must be subservient to our ideas of eternal misery: and such views also as these of the situation of the lost, will tend to vindicate his goodness and his justice.

5. Of the attribute of Divine goodness, it has been thought sufficient to say, that it is not, as in man, a virtue of constitution, but an independent perfection, consistent with infinite wisdom, and truth, and equity. It may, moreover, be reconciled with eternal punishment, if we consider that hell is the portion of those only who have despised the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering. Not in remitting the punishment of the impenitent, but *in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iv. 9. iii. 16. And in order that they may this believe and be saved, God graciously sets before them death and life, the terrors of the Law, and the promises of the Gospel. The means of grace are put into their hands, and the Holy Spirit is striving with their hearts. They are solicited in the most affectionate manner to embrace life, and assured that God willeth not their death, and that there will be joy in heaven on their conversion. Can it be an impeachment of the Divine goodness, if they who thus perish in spite of it be given over to the consequences of their obstinacy,—if they have judgment without mercy, who have abused the season, and deliberately despised the offer of mercy?

In an age in which benevolence is the fashionable, and the only virtue,—in which we hear so much of the feelings of the heart, and the refinements of delicacy, and so little fear of God and a regard to his glory,—men will very plausibly harangue on the inconsistency of eternal punishment with infinite goodness. But this is to address the passions and prejudice and corrupt taste of the world. It is to argue

from the partial views of men. It is to forget that God is the governor of the universe—that he consults the good of the whole system—that he acts by unchangeable laws—that it is unreasonable to expect any alteration in his laws in favour of those, who had a fair warning given them by God himself, but who would never submit to the measures of his providence nor believe the declarations of his will,—Hobbery's Serm. xii. It is to forget, also, what hath very ably been urged upon the subject, 'that there is a previous obligation upon every one that cometh into the world, either to do those duties, or to submit to those penalties, which preserve or promote the general happiness, and that no evil is suffered to continue in the creation, but to avoid a greater.' Seed, Serm. u. s.

6. With regard to the justice of God on this point, there have been many objections. There have been also as many replies, and such as should, at least, silence objections: unless we knew more than we can possibly know in this world, of the nature of sin and the moral government of God, the argument drawn from the supposed disproportion between offences committed in time, and torments inflicted for ever, can have little weight. With our limited ideas, it is impossible to state accurately the proportion between guilt and punishment. If the length of time employed in committing sin were the measure of its punishment, a life of sixty years' disobedience would only be succeeded by sixty years of torments. Nay, the wicked are punished in this world; and we often say, in pressing holiness upon men, that the penal evils which naturally follow sin here are greater than its pleasures. Upon the idea of proportion then God is unrighteous who taketh vengeance in another world. The shortest period of future misery is as indefensible as the longest. *He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much*, Luke xvi. 10. But we must know all the consequences and tendencies of sin, as it is opposite to the greatest good, as it increaseth the general corruption, as it disorders the government of God, before we can estimate its guilt. It is in this view that we defend the conduct of human legislation in punishing crimes, small in themselves, with death. *And shall mortal man be more just than God?* Besides, men punish with death, while there is a possibility of a criminal's repenting; but

we may safely affirm, that God never punisheth till his grace hath been finally rejected, and men have sold themselves to work wickedness beyond any possibility of redemption.

In these circumstances, what can be expected but that God's *anger should be accomplished, and his fury rest upon them?* Ezek. v. 13. He who seeth from everlasting to everlasting, and calleth the things that are not as though they were, knoweth that the disposition of habitual offenders would never lead them from death unto life.* When men have been long accustomed to do evil, even with the means of grace in their power, their recovery is desperate: of this the antediluvian world is an instance. From one century to another, God had given them space to repent of their abominations, and they repented not. Thus it is with all impenitent sinners, and where is the injustice of their punishment? Is God bound to alter the constitution of his dispensations, to make men happy against their will, and against their nature? As to their repentance in hell, without the means of grace, it is impossible; and we have no warrant to expect that such means will be afforded them. The wrath of God will, indeed, cause them exceedingly to fear and quake. They will be covered with remorse and confusion. But where are the dispositions of love and obedience? Without these they would harden again, like metal taken from the furnace, should a period be assigned to their sufferings. I promised, lastly, to remark—

The consistency of our doctrine with the conduct of God:

The speculations of men yield less reluctantly to facts, than to reasonings. Now it is a fact incontrovertible in the conversion of sinners, that, when they begin to consider their ways, and God lets loose his terrors, they are sensible of the abominable turpitude and malignity of sin, and acquit that justice which denounces eternal punishment. As repentance, of which this idea is an inseparable character, is the work of the Spirit of Truth, I have always considered this fact as decisive upon the subject. Such a persuasion, in such circumstances, cannot but proceed from him

that calleth us. Now, if this be the case in the present world, when a man is but just awakened from the dream of sin, and can only recollect a few of his unnumbered transgressions, how will it be with the criminal in that state, when, his understanding being immensely extended, the soul will comprehend, at one view, all her accumulated guilt, all her secret and all her presumptuous sins?

The justice of God, in punishing impenitent sinners with everlasting misery, hath been rashly and presumptuously arraigned. But is it repugnant to his conduct in the pardon and salvation of the penitent, by Jesus Christ? Doth not the substitution of an innocent person for the guilty, equally militate against our imperfect notions of equity, as the infliction of an eternal penalty for a temporary transgression? Till we can fully account for the former of these doctrines, let us not be offended at the latter. At least, let us be persuaded, that *the just Lord is in the midst of us, and that he will not do iniquity*, Zeph. iii. 5. *He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he*, Deut. xxxii. 4. *He will be justified in his sayings, and will overcome when he is judged*, Rom. iii. 4. DR. CROUCH.

Men are incompetent to decide upon the fitness of God's Judgments.

THINK you it hard to be thus forced to judge meanly of yourselves, and your many deservings?—Then,—and not till then,—begin to reason against the Divine Justice and the sentence of the law, when you know all the mysteries of God's glorious character and kingdom. Then, when you are shot-up to such an unmeasurable height of wisdom, as to be fit judges of HIS proceedings; when you can measure how much evil there is in sin; and how little harm would result to the whole system of creation, if the universal Lord should dispense with the breach of his laws, or even punish his creatures in a less degree than he threatens to do; when you have settled these things, then rejudge Divine Justice, censure the sentence of the Almighty; and tell the Most High, that your petty sins deserve not such treatment.

But, as you scarce have yet come to all this knowledge, and will probably find the glass of your life emptied of its sand, be-

* Patitur pœnas peccandi sola voluntas;
Nam æelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum
Facti crimen habet.

fore you have finished your calculations on these subjects, it will be your wisdom in the mean time, to attend rather to things, of which you *may* be judges. Look around you to plain matters of fact. These shew the world to be in a fallen, perishing state. Sin and misery overspread it. Neither will you deny, that if you had the management of this world's affairs, such and such sins should not have been punished so severely, as you find they are punished in the course of God's providence. For example, God often punishes extravagance, and libertines, with want, with diseases, and with untimely death. If you had been left the judges of these matters, you would not have thought it should be so.—

So when you come into the next world, and see the lake of fire, that burneth with brimstone, the torment of the wicked, may not you find yourself mistaken, just in the same manner? REV. JOS. MILNER.

The Day of Judgment a day of rejoicing to the Believer.

JOYOUS, indeed, will it be to the righteous, when, rising from their graves at the voice of the archangel, they shall be hurried forward to meet their dear Lord, whom they have so longed for, coming towards them in the middle heavens, amidst surrounding myriads. While on earth, they were always meditating upon the event, and preparing themselves for it; but so weak their faith, and so earthly every thing about them, that imagination did but gasp in its efforts to conceive it, like one panting for breath when the lungs have lost the power of action.

But as imagination will thus put forth itself in feeble attempts to explore unveiled glories, let us go on as we may to ruminate on the joy of this event to those who love the Lord, and love his appearing.

Now, then, on first opening their eyes, like new-born infants, they behold with equal wonder and delight, a new scene of things spread before them. No longer such things as this world is made of, hills and vales, wood and water, fields and houses, shops and markets, men and horses, dragging through this poor life, with little that can be called pleasure, and abundance of pain; but a most captivating novelty fills them with amazement and delight, beholding the wondrous change in themselves, in each other, and in all about

them. They know neither where nor what they are: yet do they already feel inconceivably happy; and will hardly believe, for joy, that the day is come. 'Is that day,' they will cry, 'we have been so long waiting for indeed come? We never seemed to ourselves to believe it would come at all, notwithstanding all the assurances we had of it: its remoteness seemed like that of a star in the heavens, never to be reached. But yesterday things were as they had been from the beginning; and, much as we longed for the end of things, we knew not how to look to the end. To-day behold, to our inexpressible joy, the end is come. We used to talk of the fulfilling of this and the other prophecy, yet could we not clearly see any of them fulfilled to our heart's content. But now, indeed, we see all things fulfilled. How often have we talked of *old things passing away, and all things becoming new; of new heavens and a new earth!* How often used we to read with delight of God's inexpressible love to his people, and *feed*, as we used to call it, upon the precious promises! But could we have conceived how precious those things were they promised to us, they would even then have been ten thousand times more so. O, we seem to ourselves to have been very unbelievers; to have had, in a manner, no faith at all, even in its most lively exercises—no fervour in our prayers—no love in our hearts—no devotion in our lives, when such things as these were to be the result! Where was the faith, where the love, where the humility, self-abasement, submission in any degree proportionate to the claims of that most holy God, in whose sight the heavens themselves are not pure? What visions of glory do we behold! What unutterable things do we hear! What rapturous delight do we seem to drink in at every pore! Our whole souls, yea, and our bodies too, every sense, every faculty, seems to be expanded with rapture. Now, indeed, do we behold that adorable Goodness, who seemed always in his very nature impervious to sight. Now do we behold Him—his own unveiled self—seen by the newly adapted powers bestowed upon us for seeing things utterly invisible in the days of our flesh. For though he was even then hid from us by nothing but our own blindness, yet was that very blindness an impenetrable veil. But now we behold spirit itself, as before we

saw nothing but the gross matter of the poor world that's gone. And he seems not to be in one place, but in all places alike. We see him within ourselves—we see him without; we see him near—afar off—every where round about us—through the interminable regions of space; and every where surrounded by vast multitudes of shining ones, all bathing, as it were, in the ocean of his glory, and drinking unextinguishable life and joy from the continual emanations of his blessed self.

‘ But we are confounded and abashed at the sight of ourselves; we feel that we deserve not this exquisite happiness—which seems yet intolerable from its vastness; and we almost wonder that, from conscious shame and self-conviction, we seek not to hide ourselves from his presence. Yet, lo! instead of shunning, we seem to be drawn irresistibly towards him by the cords of his love, and have no where to hide our shame but in the folds of his garments: and there is it so strangely enveloped, that it no longer seems a reproach to ourselves. *The Saviour of sinners;—the Justifier of the ungodly;—the Resurrection and the Life;—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;*—seems written in golden characters upon every fold. These are the very characters by which he revealed himself to us in the days of his flesh. Then were we indeed always in a manner seeking that salvation, that righteousness, that holiness which yet we never thought we had found; but lo! now, now we have found it all. Here is our salvation, our righteousness, our holiness, our joy. We have found him whom our souls love. He is indeed revealed to us now: we behold him with our eyes, and he has taken possession of our whole hearts. We talked of being new creatures before, and were indeed graciously accounted by him as such; but by reason of the worldliness and carnality of our hearts, which seemed to poison our holiest affections, and straiten us in every duty, we could never think ourselves so: but now, for the first time, we perceive ourselves to be new creatures indeed. He is revealed to us now, not in word only, or by the simple illumination of his Spirit, but by a full, complete, and total transformation into his very likeness. His righteousness and his love is in a strange manner wrought into our very substance; and it is not possible we can now ever be

separated from him. Now, indeed, beholding the glory of the Lord, are we changed into the same image; and reflecting it from ourselves, as from a mirror, we render back to him again the glory we derived from him. How does all the beauty and pageantry of the world seem to deaden and fade away into nothing! Nay, instead of admiring, we seem to loathe it, and wonder we could ever endure the sight. The gaudy trappings of worldly vanity and pride, what are they? The lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, which then we had enough to do in subduing, is now completely extinguished. Now are we indeed in heaven. Angels, and not men—we seem to be, as it were, every where at once; to have all being, in a manner, brought before us; to know every thing we look at, in its essential nature, in all its nice dependencies, subtle combinations, curious properties, by actual intuition. Nay, every thing seems to be brought within us; we know not how—and we seem to be all as one; and he, whom our souls love, to be one with us. We feel that we have bodies, and the very bodies we once had; yet how can those vile bodies be the same with the glorious bodies we now have? What forms! what countenances! what strength! health! vigour! activity! buoyancy! We seem to tread the very heavens! to walk in the midst of stars! to see through all space! to behold every thing at once, yet every thing distinct! any part, or the whole together, as we please, to hear and converse with myriads and myriads at once—all full of joy, and full of the sweetest discourse—all distinct, yet infinitely varied—all about what *is*, and nothing about what *shall be*; as if nothing could be heard or seen more, yet nothing could be heard or seen enough;—every thing contrived to afford ceaseless everlasting delight; continual increase, without abatement; infinite variety, without change; the sweetest rest amidst ten thousand activities. Every faculty of soul and body stretched out at once, and stretched to the utmost, yet no fatigue—continual rapture, without subsequent depression; a perpetual feast, without satiety. Now we know what it is to be filled with the Spirit: it is to have our whole souls expanded to the utmost with love, and light, and joy, sent forth at once to the furthest bounds of creation, and then returning, as the blood to the heart, back to

the bosom of God. Now, indeed, do we fully comprehend all those mighty mysteries so obscurely revealed to us on earth. We see the nature of that union between the Father and the Son, and the nature of that union between the Son and us; and again, through the medium of the Son, the nature of the union between us and the Father. O what *could* we see of the glory of God in the degraded and humiliating form the Lord Jesus took upon him while he was upon earth! Under that degraded form, as assumed for our sakes, we saw indeed more of the goodness of the Lord than we could otherwise have seen; yea, it may be said that under that form alone could the glory of his goodness, by us earthlings, have been beheld at all. But it *was* a degraded form; and we well remember how difficult it was to look through it, even to those whose faith was the strongest. To many what a stumbling-block was it! It was *weakness*; it was *foolishness*. Measuring thee, O Lord, by themselves, they thought such an abasement so dishonourable to thee, that the plainest and most positive declarations of thy word could not bring them to yield their assent. But how is thy glory magnified, O Lord, in this abasement of thyself for the exaltation of poor degraded human nature! And how little did men consult thy glory by bringing it down to a level with their own poor ideas! But then we could see nothing clearly. We were surrounded by thy presence, and yet were unconscious of it. We knew we had access to thee by faith and prayer, through the mediation of our Great High Priest: but still thou wast in heaven, and we on earth; and though the way was open, the end seemed distant; namely, the actual manifestation of thine own glorious self. But now our eyes see thee. We see thee as thou art seen in the sanctuary. We not only see thy glory and blessedness, but we are actually ourselves partakers of it, and our joy is indeed full.'

I am aware of the vanity of such poor attempts in a wretched mortal to express the raptures of a soul in bliss. But prone as we are to please ourselves with fancies on a thousand idle subjects, may we not indulge them with advantage in imagining to our minds as well as we may the joys of the unseen world? Surely if our business is to meditate, those joys are a fit subject for the mind to act upon—at once profit-

able and pleasing. Not seeing the things themselves, feeble indeed will be our expression of the joy. But it must be remembered that we are not picturing to our minds what is merely fanciful and illusive. The joys we are so busy about are all real: our conceptions of them, indeed, falling short by all the distance between heaven and earth; yet wrong but in the feebleness of the effort to grasp the mighty truth. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

But whatever our imaginations may be, let us remember that that day, though it will speedily come, is not yet arrived; and that we are bid to look forward to it as a motive of patient endurance and strenuous exertion in this our present day of trial. O my brethren! it is only by patient continuance in well-doing, that you can have any joy in the prospect of that glorious day; for you can no otherwise have any joy in it when it comes.

There is another part of the scene not yet described, but which is referred to by our Lord himself; those wretched and melancholy souls placed at his left hand. Far off to the left, we may suppose, of him and his blessed company, may be seen another set, descried no otherwise than by the force of contrast. Because these blessed ones seem enshrined, as it were, in all the brilliancy of the light of heaven, therefore ~~von~~ gloomy cloud of melancholy souls is rendered visible by its own darkness. But it will not long be visible: for like a grumbling tempest, that has spent its force, it is sinking fast down into the unblest regions of eternal night. These are they, who, while upon earth, thought only of an earthly provision, but made none for heaven. Unrenewed, ungracious, unsanctified, they had, according to the parable, no oil in their lamps. They had no devotion in their hearts—no zeal, no faith, no love to God, no wish to please him, no charity, no feeling, fellow-feeling, Christian feeling; nothing but what is sordid, selfish, sensual, earthly, devilish. They had no hungering and thirsting after righteousness, no humility, no right consciousness of sin, no true penitence; no convincing need of the Saviour, and no love to him; no longing for heaven as their home, and for God as their portion; but, on the contrary, nothing but hatred

for love, aversion for enjoyment, fear for hope, and melancholy bodings for exhilarating anticipations.

O that, by reflecting upon the terrors of this day, ere it come, men might be brought to a participating foresight of its joys! The prospect of these joys can alone mitigate the sorrows of life; and how greatly will it allay the sufferings of death! In the nearness of these raptures, the anticipation of which constitutes the very essence of a Christian's life, pain has been sometimes least felt when most violent. The transports which filled the bosom of the martyr, so soon to enter into the joy of his Lord, have almost deadened the sense of pain, while his body was consuming in the flames. Soon have those flames done their work; and instantly his soul, on fire only with love, mounts up from the ashes of his poor body, thus offered as the sacrifice of his faith, like the ascending smoke from the altar.

The day of the Lord is at hand. Assured by faith of its certainty, we shall see it also to be near. Let, then, the eye of faith fasten upon it as upon an object no less interesting than certain; obscured indeed at present by the foggy atmosphere through which it is seen, but near enough already to fill the whole field of our vision, and brought, as it were, apparently nearer by its own vastness.

And O how happy is it for us, that when all worldly things are not only contingent, and *may* fail, but in a very short time inevitably *will* fail—how happy is it for us that that event, so joyous to the righteous as to render all others comparatively trivial, never will and never can fail! Under this conviction, well may they endure all their trials with patience for the Lord's sake, knowing assuredly that *yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

REV. W. GILPIN.

The Glory and Completeness of the Spiritual Temple.

In order to describe our privileges still further, according to the design of the Holy Spirit in the text, Eph. ii. 19-22, let us ANTICIPATE THE FINISHING OF THE TEMPLE.

Suppose, then, the period arrived, when the scaffolding is struck down and the rubbish moved away: that is, suppose this earth, which was the stage for its erection,

now removed from beneath it, and the wicked, the refuse of mankind, cast far away out of sight. Conceive that you see nothing but the building. Lo! it stands high in view, for the admiration of the surrounding universe. *Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks: consider her palaces—that ye may tell it to the generation following,* Ps. xlviii. 12, 13. What is her foundation? The Rock of Ages! Who is her inhabitant?—her inhabitant is God! Not a flaw, not a blemish is to be seen: every stone is in its proper place; and all contributing to the beauty of the whole! No want of symmetry in the general outline and plan—nothing imperfect in the execution of each part. Behold it stands an eternal monument, to the glory of God, of his power, and wisdom, and grace! It is all bright and glorious, wherever you take your view of it—radiating in every part with the beamings of divine glory! Her light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper! It is a temple of souls! every stone is a living soul, a blood-bought spirit! Every one is a chosen warrior, who has fought his battle in his days, and has conquered! They have come out of great tribulation to be stones for this building! Affliction gave them their polish; and the cement which unites them is love!

But while we admire its beauty, let not the suspicion arise, that any thing should happen to mar its form or impair its glory. Earthly fabrics have, indeed, every thing to fear from the effects of inclement skies: for they must all, in their turn, become like those ancient cities, where thorns come up in the palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof—where the mouldering arches and half-remaining walls shew the devastating hand of time. But our Zion hath nought to fear from time, for time ceases when her glory begins: and though she must be exposed to the storm and beating of the rain, during the dark watches of the night; yet when the morning of the resurrection cometh, it will be as clear sunshine after rain, *even a morning without clouds*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. As she shall suffer by no natural causes of dissolution, so neither shall she fall by hostile violence. It was truly said by Christ to those who spoke of the temple at Jerusalem, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, that the day should

come upon her when one stone should not be left upon another, which should not be thrown down : but it shall not be so with our spiritual temple. Even now we may ask, *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?* Even now we may look at her foundation and ask,

What shall shake thy sure repose?

Resting on him, she mocks the assaults of besiegers, even in her weakness : but when the day of her perfection is come, the very sound of the shoutings of her enemies can be heard no more. Satan and his agents must first break through their chains of darkness, ere they can again plant their engines against her. *In righteousness shalt thou be established : thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear ; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee,* Isa. liv. 14.

REV. H. MARTYN.

The Happiness of Heaven.

THE happiness of heaven is so great that it cannot be fully known till it be fully enjoyed. It is a remaining rest, an inaccessible light, fresh and overflowing pleasures, an incorruptible crown, an eternal kingdom, too much for me to utter, or you to conceive. But nevertheless, if the sight and full fruition of God, if the society of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect, if everlasting songs of praises and hallelujahs, if eternal raptures and ecstasies can be accounted a supporting and an all-sufficing good, all these serve to extol the all-sufficiency of Christ our Saviour, who can bestow upon us this ravishing, satisfying joy and glory. God is now to us the spring-head and fountain of all our mercies and comforts, and we lie below at the fall of this spring, and draw refreshments from him only through the conduit-pipes of providences and ordinances, and live upon second-hand enjoyments ; but in heaven we shall be laid close to the fountain itself, and drink in divine communications as they flow immediately from God, without having them deadened and flattened in the conveyance. Now we behold him through a glass darkly, then we shall see him face to face, see him as he is, and know him as we are known by him : and if it causeth now such raptures of joy in us, when he sometimes darts in half a glance of his eye upon the soul, Oh then ! within what bounds can our joy contain itself, when we shall con-

stantly fix our eye upon God, and steadfastly behold his face—that face from which the most glorious angels, as conscious of their own unworthiness to behold, cover and veil their own ? If now when God gives us some glorious discoveries of himself, we are ready to faint and melt down under them ; certainly in heaven, when we shall lie under the glorious rays of the Deity beating so fully upon us, it is so great that there were no living there, did not the same God strengthen as well as fill our capacities. This is that beatifical vision, that heaven of heavens, that glory wherein the angels are satisfied, that sight wherein God shall bestow upon us a clearer eye than that of faith, and be always present with us in a nearer way than that of comfort. This is that all-sufficient and all-satisfying state which the Lord Jesus Christ can and will bring all his unto ;—a state of inconceivable and endless felicity, far surmounting in glory, whatever our narrow conceptions can now apprehend,—a state wherein we shall for ever join with angels in singing praises to the Lamb, who hath redeemed us with his own blood, and manifested himself to be an all-sufficient Saviour, able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, purchasing so great and glorious an inheritance for them, and bringing them to the possession of it.

BP. HOPKINS.

The certainty of Future Glory to the Believer.

LET us strengthen our belief of the blessed state after death. Divine truths lose their influence and efficacy when they are not steadfastly believed. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence or conviction of things not seen,* Heb. xi. 1. The Spirit confirms our faith, not by a pure physical act, but by convincing reason of the truth of the Gospel. The life of Christ, so glorious in holiness ; his doctrine, so becoming the wisdom and other excellent attributes of the Deity ; his miracles, so great, numerous, open, and beneficial, not merely to surprise the spectators with astonishment, but to touch their hearts ; his death, foretold by the prophets, and exactly agreeing in all the circumstances of the predictions ; his resurrection, the most noble operation of the divine power ; are the strongest proofs that what he has revealed as the counsel of God for our redemption, and the pre-

parations of glory for the saints in heaven, are divine truths. And the efficacy of the Spirit of Christ in sanctifying his disciples in all ages, is a continual and as satisfying an argument that the Gospel is derived from God, the Fountain of truth, as extraordinary miracles; for holiness is as inseparable a property of the divine nature as omnipotence, and the sanctification of the soul as divine an effect as the resurrection of the body. Now in the Gospel God enters into covenant with obedient believers, to be their God; a title and relation that, supposing them the most happy here, all the enjoyments of this world cannot fulfil. This covenant is not dissolved by death, for he uses this style *after the death of his faithful servants*; and from hence it follows they are partakers of his glory and joys in the next life; for the honor of his veracity is most dear to him. The Psalmist declares that he has *magnified his word above all his name*. No perfections of his nature are more sacred and inviolable than his truth. The foundations of nature shall be overturned, and the most solid parts of the creation destroyed, but his promises shall be completely accomplished. We are assured by his infallible authority, that *there remaineth a rest for the people of God*. And he that receiveth this testimony sets to his seal that God is true; honors the truth of God's word, and binds himself more firmly to his service, and is encouraged to leave this sensible world for that which is infinitely better. Our confidence and patience in well-doing, and in suffering the utmost evil to nature, is from the pregnant apprehensions of the reality of eternal things. *We know*, saith the Apostle, *that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 1. This fortified him against the terrors of death. When Stephen saw the heavens open, and the Son of God ready to receive him, with what courage and constancy did he encounter the bloody rage of his murderers! Faith supplies the want of vision; it pierces the clouds, opens a window in heaven, sees the crowns of righteousness prepared for the saints, and sweetens the bitterest passage to it. But if our faith be weak and wavering, our courage will decline in the needful hour. It is with Christians, in their last passage from earth to heaven, as with

St. Peter walking upon the waters to Christ: whilst his faith was firm in Christ, he went upon the waves as on the firm land; but upon the rising of a storm, his faith sunk into fear, and he sunk into the waters; till our Saviour upon his earnest prayer, *Lord, save me*, took hold of him, and raised him with that compassionate reproof, *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Matt. xiv. 31.

DR. BATES.

The Heavenly Glory through the Mercy of God, and not by human merit.

THE designing, the preparation, and actual bestowing of the heavenly glory, is from the mercy of God.

This will appear by considering, that it is absolutely impossible that a mere creature, though perfect, should deserve any thing from God; for enjoying its being and powers of working from his goodness, the product of all is entirely due to him, and the payment of a debt acquires no title to a reward. He is the Proprietary and Lord of all by creation. Hence it is clear, that in the order of distributive justice nothing can be challenged from him.

Besides, such is the infinite perfection of God in himself, that no benefit can rebound to him by the service of the creature. *When ye shall have done all, say we are unprofitable servants, for we have done but what we ought to do*, Luke xvii. 10. The neglect of our duty justly exposes to punishment; but the performance of it deserves no reward, because no advantage accrues to God by it. *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?* Rom. xi. 35. He challenges all creatures, even of the highest order. To speak strictly therefore, when God crowns the angels with glory, he gives what is merely his own, and does not render what is theirs. If he should leave them in their pure nature or deprive them of their being, he were no loser, nor injurious to them; for what law binds him to enrich them with immortal glory, who are no ways profitable to him, or to preserve that being they had from his unexcited goodness? No creature can give to him, therefore none can receive from him by way of valuable consideration.

There is no proportion between the best works of men and the excellency of the reward, much less an equivalence. It was the just and humble acknowledgment of

Jacob to God, *I am less than the least of all thy mercies*, those that common providence dispenses for the support and refreshment of this temporal life; but how much less than the glorious excellencies of the supernatural, divine life, wherein the saints reign with God for ever! The most costly, the most difficult and hazardous services are equally nothing in point of merit, with the giving but a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ, there being no correspondence in value between them and the kingdom of heaven. The Apostle tells us, *I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us*, Rom. viii. 18; and suffering is more than doing. God rewards his faithful servants, not according to the dignity of their works, but his own liberality and munificence. . . . And the clearest notion of the Deity is, that he is a Being infinite in all perfections; therefore all-sufficient and most willing to make his creatures completely happy.

If a creature perfectly holy, that never sinned, is incapable to merit any thing from God, much less can those who are born in a sinful state, and guilty of innumerable actual transgressions, pretend to deserve any reward for their works. This were presumption inspired by prodigious vanity; for by his most free grace they are restored in conversion to that spiritual power by which they serve him. The chaos was not a deader lump before the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, than the best of men were before the vital influences of the Spirit wrought upon them. And for this they are so deeply obliged to God, that if a thousand times more for his glory were performed, yet they cannot discharge what they owe. The continuance and increase of the powerful supplies of grace to the saints, who even since their holy calling by many lapses have justly deserved that God should withdraw his grieved Spirit, are new obligations to thankfulness; and the more grace the less merit. The best works of men are imperfect, allayed with the mixtures of infirmities, and not of full weight in the divine balance. If God should strictly examine our righteousness, it will be found neither pure nor perfect in his eyes, and, without favor and indulgence, would be rejected; and that which wants pardon, cannot deserve praise and glory. He shows *mercy unto thou-*

sands of them that love him and keep his commandments, Exod. xx. 6. If obedience were meritorious, it were strict justice to reward them. The Apostle prays for Onesiphorus, who had exposed himself to great danger for his love to the Gospel, *the Lord grant that he may find mercy in that day*, 2 Tim. i. 18. The divine mercy gives the crown of life to the faithful in the day of eternal recompense.

The meritorious cause of our obtaining heaven is the obedience of Jesus Christ, comprehending all that he did and suffered to reconcile God to us. From him as the Eternal Word we have all benefits in the order of nature; *for all things were made by him* and for him, as the incarnate Word, all good things in the order of grace. What we enjoy in time and expect in eternity is by Him. DR. BATES.

Reasonableness for delighting in the Thoughts of our Heavenly Rest.

Is there such a rest remaining for us? Why then are our thoughts no more upon it? Why are not our hearts continually there? Why dwell we not there in constant contemplation? What is the cause of this neglect? Are we reasonable in this, or are we not? Hath the eternal God provided us such a glory, and promised to take us up to dwell with himself, and is not this worth thinking on? Should not the strongest desires of our hearts be after it? Do we believe this, and yet forget and neglect it? If God will not give us leave to approach this light, what mean's all his earnest invitations? Why doth he condemn our earthly-mindedness, and command us to set our affections on things above? Ah, vile hearts! If God were against it, we were likelier to be for it; but when he commands our hearts to heaven, then they will not stir one inch: like our predecessors, the sinful Israelites; when God would have them march for Canaan, then they mutiny, and will not stir; but when God bids them not go, then they will be presently marching. If God say, *Love not the world, nor the things of the world*; we dote upon it. How freely, how frequently can we think of our pleasures, our friends, our labours, our flesh and its lusts; yea, our wrongs and miseries, our fears and sufferings! But where is the Christian, whose heart is on his rest? What is the matter? Are we so full of joy, that we need no more?

Or is there nothing in heaven for our joyous thoughts? Or rather, are not our hearts carnal and stupid? Let us humble these sensual carnal hearts that have in them no more of Christ and glory. . . . I require thee, as ever thou hopest for a part in this glory, that thou presently take thy heart to task, chide it for its wilful strangeness to God, turn thy thoughts from the pursuit of vanity, bend thy soul to study eternity, busy it about the life to come, habituate thyself to such contemplations, and let not those thoughts be seldom and cursory, but bathe thy soul in heaven's delights; and if thy backward soul begin to flag, and thy thoughts to scatter, call them back, hold them to their work, bear not with their laziness, nor connive at one neglect. And when thou hast, in obedience to God, tried this work, got acquainted with it, and kept a guard on thy thoughts till they are accustomed to obey, thou wilt then find thyself in the suburbs of heaven, and that there is, indeed, a sweetness in the work and way of God, and that the life of Christianity is a life of joy. Thou wilt meet with those abundant consolations which thou hast prayed, panted, and groaned after, and which so few Christians do ever here obtain, because they know not this way to them, or else make not conscience of walking in it. Say not, 'We are unable to set our own hearts on heaven; this must be the work of God only.' Though God be the chief disposer of your hearts, yet next under him you have the greatest command of them yourselves. Though without Christ you can do nothing, yet under him you may do much, and must, or else it will be undone, and yourselves undone through your neglect. Christians, if your souls were healthful and vigorous, they would perceive incomparably more delight and sweetness in the believing joyful thoughts of your future blessedness, than the soundest stomach finds in its food, or the strongest senses in the enjoyment of their objects; so little painful would this work be to you.

BAXTER.

Our stable peace, our solid tranquillity, our perpetual security, is in the world to come: in this world we wage a daily war with our spiritual enemies; we have no rest. If one sin be subdued, another is up in arms. We are continually exposed to temptations; but the divine laws forbid us

to yield to them. Surely, amidst such constant pressures, we ought to be joyful in the prospect of hastening to Christ by a speedy departure. How does our Lord himself instruct us on this very head? *Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* Who does not wish to be free from sorrow? Who would not run to take possession of joy? Since then to see Christ is joy, and since our joy cannot be full till we do see HIM, what blindness, what infatuation is it, to love the penal pressures and tears of the world, and not to be desirous of quickly partaking of that joy which shall never pass away!

The cause of this is UNBELIEF. We none of us believe really and solidly those things to be true which the God of truth promises, whose word is eternally firm to those that put their trust in him. If a man of a grave and respectable character promises you any thing, you do not doubt his performance, because you know him to be faithful. Now God himself speaks with you, and dare you waver in uncertainty? He promises you immortality when you shall depart out of this world; and will you still doubt? This is not to know God. This is to offend, with the sin of unbelief, Christ the Lord and Master of believers: *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*, said the blessed Apostle; who computed it to be gain indeed, no longer to be detained in the snares of the world, no longer to be obnoxious to sin and the flesh, to be exempt from excruciating pressures, to be freed from the power of Satan, and, lastly, to go to the joys of eternal salvation upon the call of Christ.

CYPRIAN.

Considerations for our longing for the coming of Christ.

OH! what is this world that you should be fond of it, and cling to it with so much eagerness? How long are all these enjoyments that are peculiar to it; and how many its vexations, its snares, and its sorrows? Review your pilgrimage thus far; and though you must acknowledge that goodness and mercy have attended you all the days of your life, Psal. xxiii. 6, yet has not that very mercy itself planted some thorns in your paths, and given you some wise and necessary, yet painful intimations, that this is not your rest? Mic. ii.

10. Review the monuments of your withered joys, of your blasted hopes ; if there be yet any monuments of them remaining, more than a mournful remembrance they have left behind in your afflicted heart. Look upon the graves that have swallowed up many of your dearest and most amiable friends, perhaps in the very bloom of life, and in the greatest intimacy of your converse with them ; and reflect, that if you hold it out a few years more, death will renew its conquests at your expence, and devour the most precious of those that yet survive.—View the living, as well as the dead ; behold the state of human nature, under the many grievous marks of its apostacy from God ; and say, whether a wise and good man would wish to continue always here. Methinks were I myself secure from being reached by any of the arrows that fly around me, I could not but mourn to see the wounds that are given by them, and to hear the groans of those that are continually falling under them. The diseases and calamities of mankind are so many, and which is most grievous of all, the distempers of the mind are so various, and so threatening, that the world appears almost like an hospital : and a man, whose heart is tender, is ready to feel his spirits broken, as he walks through it and surveys the sad scene ; especially when he sees how little he can do for the recovery of those whom he pities. Are you a Christian, and does it not pierce your heart to see how human nature is sunk in vice and in shame ? To see with what amazing insolence some are making themselves openly vile, and how the name of Christ is dishonoured by many too that call themselves his people ? to see the unlawful deeds and filthy practices of them that live ungodly, and to behold at the same time the infirmities at least, and irregularities of those concerning whom we have better hopes ? And do you not wish to escape from such a world, where a righteous and compassionate soul must be vexed from day to day by so many spectacles of sin and misery ? 2 Pet. ii. 8.

Yea, to come nearer home. . . . Do you not feel a remainder of indwelling sin ; the sad consequence of the original revolt of our nature from God ? Are you not struggling every day with some residue of corruption, or at least mourning on account of the weakness of your graces ? Do you not often find your spirits dull and languid,

when you would desire to raise them to the greatest fervor in the service of God ? Do you not find your hearts too often insensible of the richest instances of his love, and your hands feeble in his service, even when to will is present with you ? Rom. vii.

18. Does not your life, in its best days and hours, appear a low unprofitable thing, when compared with what you are sensible it ought to be, and with what you wish that it were ? Are you not frequently, as it were, stretching the pinions of the mind, and saying, *Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest ?* Psal. lv. 6.

Should you not then rejoice in the thought, that Jesus comes to deliver you from these complaints ?—That he comes to answer your wishes, and to fulfil the largest desires of your hearts ; those desires that he himself has inspired ? That he comes to open upon you a world of purity and joy, of active, exalted, and unwearied services ?

O Christian, how often have you cast a longing eye towards those happy shores, and wished to pass the sea, the boisterous, unpleasant, dangerous sea, that separates you from them ? When your Lord has condescended to make you a short visit in his ordinances on earth, how have you blessed the time and the place, and pronounced it, amidst any other disadvantage of situation, to be the very gate of heaven ? Gen. xxviii.

17. And is it so delightful to behold this gate, and will it not be much more to enter into it ? Is it so delightful to receive the visits of Jesus for an hour, and will it not be infinitely more so to dwell with him for ever ? Lord, may you well say, When I dwell with thee I shall dwell in holiness ; for thou thyself art holiness ; I shall dwell in love, for thou thyself art love ; I shall dwell in joy, for thou art the fountain of joy, as *thou art in the Father, and the Father in thee*, John xvii. 21. Bid welcome to his approach, therefore, to take you at your word, and to fulfil to you that saying of his, on which your soul has so often rested with heavenly peace and pleasure ; *Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me*, John xvii. 24.

Surely you may see in this view, ‘the sooner Christ comes, the better.’ What though the residue of your days be cut off in the midst ? What though you leave

many expected pleasures in life untasted, and many schemes unaccomplished? Is it not enough, that what is taken from a mortal life shall be added to a glorious eternity; and that you shall spend those days and years in the presence and service of Christ in heaven, which you might otherwise have spent with him and for him in the imperfect enjoyments and labours of earth?

DODDRIDGE.

Considerations on the moment of Death.

WE ought seriously to consider all which is to pass in that moment of death, for which the time of this life was only bestowed upon us; and upon which depends the eternity of the other. O most dreadful point, which art the end of time, and beginning of eternity! O most fearful instant, which shuttest up the prefixed term of this life, and determinest the business of our salvation! how many things are to pass in thee! In the same instant life is to finish, all our works to be examined; and that sentence given, which is to be executed for all eternity. O last moment of life! O first of eternity! how terrible is the thought of thee, since in thee not only life is to be lost, but to be accounted for, and we then to enter into a region which we know not; in that moment I shall cease to live, in that moment I shall behold my Judge, who shall lay all my sins open before me, with all their weight, number, and enormity. In it I shall receive a strict charge of all the Divine benefits bestowed upon me; and in it a judgment shall pass upon me, either for my salvation, or damnation eternal!...

There are three things which would make a sinner tremble: The first, when his soul is to be plucked out of his body; the second, when it is to appear before God to receive judgment; and the third, when sentence is to be pronounced. How terrible, then, is this moment, wherein all these three things so terrible are to pass! Let a Christian often, whilst he lives, place himself in that instant, from whence let him behold, on one part, the time of his life which he is to live; and, on the other, the eternity whereunto he enters; and let him consider what remains unto him of that, and what he hopes for in this; in that instant a thousand years of life shall appear unto the sinner no more than one hour; and one hour of torments shall appear a

thousand years. Behold thy life from this watch-tower, from this horizon, and measure it with the eternal, and thou shalt find it of no extension.

O dreadful moment, which cuts off the thread of time, and begins the web of eternity! I will therefore provide for this moment, that I may not lose eternity; this is that precious pearl, for which I will give all that I have, or am; it shall ever be in my memory, I shall ever be solicitous of it, since it may every day come upon me.

For eternity depends upon death, death upon life, and life upon a thread, which may either be broken or cut; and that even when I most hope, and most endeavour to prolong it. My life is never secure; I will therefore ever fear that instant, which gives an end to time, and beginning to eternity.

BP. TAYLOR.

We always need the grace of the Holy Spirit. There is not an hour nor a moment in which we can be either happy or safe without it. There are, however, seasons in which our need of it is especially great and pressing. And these are the very times when the hopes of the self-deceiver perish. A day of trouble is one of them; the hour of death is another—on this side of the grave, the most appalling of all. At a distance, it is nothing; we think of it with composure; but no tongue can tell how death appears when it is close at hand. None but the dying know what it is to die. A sinking body, a receding world, a dark, lonely grave, loathsome corruption, the frightful worm—these are not trifles; they make us shiver as we think of them in connexion with a lost friend or child. But a guilty spirit, an offended God, an unknown, strange eternity—these surprise the soul by the reality which they assume; they overwhelm it by their importance.

In such an hour no slight hopes will support us. If conscience does its work, nothing but the liveliest faith, the firmest hold of the Divine promises, can give us one moment's quiet. O what an hour for all our hopes to leave us! O what a time to discover our goodness to be sin, our religion a delusion! Flesh and heart failing, the world useless, and the heaven we had so often deemed our own, out of our sight! And what is near? We know not. Nothing at which we dare to look.

But let this hour be passed—let con-

science sleep; let it be an hour of calmness—we must feel our need of the grace of Christ when it is gone. We shall be in a world of spirits: not hearing of eternity, but in it; not thinking of a judgment-seat, but trembling before it; not saying, *Is there a God?* but seeing him; not musing about heaven and hell, but standing on their borders, within a step of their pains or joys, with only a moment between us and an everlasting home.

No self-righteous hope can stand in such an hour as this. It may have rooted itself very deeply in the mind; we may have carried it about with us all our life long; it may have stood firm against many a sermon, and many a providence; it may have triumphed over the plainest declarations of the Bible, and borne unmoved the shock of death; but take it into eternity, bring it among the realities of that unseen world—where is it? It is gone. One moment has turned it into immovable despair.

REV. C. BRADLEY.

Awful prospects of the Wicked in death.

WHEN we consider that, either eternal damnation, or eternal salvation, is the instant and inseparable consequence of death; how wicked, how diabolically absurd are the jests of the infidel and the wit, when affecting to smile at that solemn event. However, with all the affected gaiety of the proud and the profane, when they come to lie on a death-bed, their mirth will forsake them, and all the boasted heroism of infidelity sink in a dreadful succession of horror and dismay. And no wonder; since

'Tis not *the dying*, but 'tis *this* they fear,
To be—they know not *what*, they know not *where*!

The prospect of meeting the Lord God Almighty constitutes the bitterest dreg in the cup of the wicked, and is the most tormenting thought, in the view of their dissolution, that racks them on the verge of eternity. How would they court death, and solicit his arrival, were it not, that *after death is the judgment!* How gladly would they meet and embrace the messenger, could they but be excused from meeting that God, the light of whose countenance makes heaven, but in whose frown is hell! From a reluctance to do this arise dismal apprehensions, dreadful

impatience, torturing doubts, and a tormenting anxiety to live. All which conflict of raging and tumultuous passions, in a soul, at the article of dissolution, and upon the point of meeting God, is most beautifully described in the following striking imagery of the poet:

'In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement!
Runs to each avenue; and shrieks for help!
But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer her's!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
O might she stay, to wash away her crimes,
And fit her for her passage! Mournful sight!
Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan
She heaves is big with horror! But the Foe,
Like a staunch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,
Pursues her close, through ev'ry lane of life,
Nor misses once the track; but presses on;
Till forced at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks——' sinks into the bottomless
and gloomy gulf of everlasting darkness and death!

Awful plunge! Dreadful exit! What heart can conceive, or tongue describe, the state of an immortal soul, trembling on the brink of fate; arrested by death; the prisoner of guilt and fear; reluctant to depart, yet viewing dissolution inevitable; looking forward to eternity with painful dread, and backward upon the world with sorrow and regret; unwilling to go, yet unable to stay; soliciting a reprieve for a year, another month only, or even a week, but denied one moment's delay; putting off in imagination or in wish, what is present to sense; quitting the world, and bidding an everlasting farewell to all its enjoyments, with nothing in prospect to compensate for the loss; at length forced to launch, though sure of shipwreck; and nothing in view, but a black abyss, a fortified heaven, and an angry God! This is the end that awaits the wicked. This is the fate of those who die without Christ! Oh that the consideration might awaken the fears of the careless, and prompt the people of God *to give diligence to make their calling and election sure!* 2 Pet. i. 10.

REV. R. DE COURCY.

Happy dissolution! were this the period of their woes. But, alas! all these tribulations are only *the beginning of sorrows*; a small drop only from that *cup of trembling*, which is mingled for their future portion.—No sooner has the last

pang dislodged their reluctant souls, but they are hurried into the presence of an injured, angry God. Not under the conducting care of beneficent angels, but exposed to the insults of accursed spirits; who lately *tempted* them, now upbraid them, and will for ever *torment* them.—Who can imagine their confusion and distress, when they stand, guilty and inexcusable, before their incensed Creator? They are received with frowns. The God that made them has no *mercy on them*, Isai. xxvii. 11. The Prince of Peace rejects them with abhorrence. He consigns them over to chains of *darkness*, and receptacles of *despair*; against the severer doom, and more public infamy of the Great Day.—Then all the vials of wrath will be emptied upon these wretched creatures. The law they have violated, and the Gospel they have slighted; the power they have defied, and the goodness they have abused; will all get themselves honour in their exemplary destruction. . . .

Resurrection will be no privilege to them; but immortality itself their everlasting curse.—Would they not bless the grave, *that land where all things are forgotten*; and wish to lie eternally hid in its deepest gloom? But the dust refuses to *conceal* their persons; or to draw a *veil* over their practices. They also must awake; must arise; must appear at the bar, and meet the Judge; a Judge, before whom *the pillars of heaven tremble, and the earth melts away*: a Judge, once long-suffering, and very compassionate; but now unalterably determined to teach stubborn offenders—What it is, to *provoke* the Omnipotent Godhead: what it is, to *trample* upon the blood of his Son; and offer *despite* to all the gracious overtures of his Spirit.

O the perplexity! the distraction! that must seize impenitent rebels, when they are summoned to the great Tribunal!—What will they do, in this day of severe visitation? This day of final decision?—Where? How? Whence, can they find help?—To which of the saints will they turn? Whither betake themselves for shelter or for succour?—Alas! 'tis all in vain; 'tis all too late.—Friends and acquaintance know them no more. Men and angels abandon them to their approaching doom. Even the Mediator, the MEDIATOR himself, deserts them in this

dreadful hour.—To *fly* will be impracticable: to justify themselves still more impossible; and now, to make any *supplications*, utterly unavailable.

Behold! the books are opened. The secrets of all hearts are disclosed. The hidden things of darkness are brought to light. How empty, how ineffectual *now*, are all those refined *artifices*, with which hypocrites imposed upon their fellow-creatures, and preserved a character in the sight of men!—The jealous God, who has been about their path, and about their bed, and spied out all their ways, sets before them the things that they have done. They cannot answer him one in a thousand, nor stand in the awful judgment. *The heavens reveal their iniquities, and the earth rises up against them*, Job xx. 27. They are *speechless* with guilt, and *stigmatised* with infamy, before all the armies of the sky, and all the nations of the redeemed. What a favour would they esteem it to hide their ashamed heads in the bottom of the ocean; or even to be buried beneath the ruins of the tottering world!

If the contempt poured upon them be thus insupportable, how will their hearts endure, when the sword of infinite indignation is unsheathed, and fiercely waved around their defenceless heads? How must they scream with wild amazement, and rend the very heavens with their cries, when the *right-aiming thunderbolts* go abroad; go abroad, with a dreadful commission, to drive them from the kingdoms of glory; and plunge them—not into the sorrows of a moment, or the tortures of an hour—but into all the restless agonies of unquenchable fire, and everlasting despair.*

Misery of miseries! too shocking for reflection to dwell upon. But, if so dismal to *foresee*, and that at a distance, together with some comfortable expectation of escaping it—O! how bitter, inconceivably bitter, to bear, without any intermission, or any mitigation, through hopeless and eternal ages!

Who has any bowels of pity?—Who has any sentiments of compassion? Who

* Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where Peace And Rest can never dwell; Hope never comes, That comes to All: but torture without end Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.

has any tender concern for his fellow-creatures? Who?—In God's name, and for Christ's sake, let him shew it; by warning every man, and beseeching every man, to seek the Lord while he may be found: to throw down the arms of rebellion before the act of indemnity expires; and submissively to adore the Lamb, while he holds out the golden Sceptre.

REV. J. HERVEY.

END OF VOL. I.

ANTHOLOGIA SACRA;

OR,

SELECT THEOLOGICAL EXTRACTS.

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ON SUBJECTS

DOCTRINAL, PRACTICAL, AND EXPERIMENTAL;

SELECTED AND ARRANGED

BY THE REV. BERNARD GILPIN, M. A.,

RECTOR OF ST. ANDREW, HERTFORD;

AND

WILLIAM HENRY VALPY, Esq.,

HON. E. I. C. CIVIL SERVICE.

It would be an inestimable benefit, if instead of so many volumes, which require the greatest part of our lives to read, we had a summary of the choice truths of our religion, divested of needless words.

J. DESPAGNE.

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ANTHOLOGIA SACRA;
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PART II.—PRACTICAL.

SECTION I.—SPECIOUS AND DECEPTIVE VIEWS OF RELIGION.

Inefficacy of mere speculative Religion.

TO come then to our business without further compliment, let us examine our ways, and consider impartially, what the religion of most men is.

We are baptised in our infancy, that is, as I conceive, dedicated and devoted to God's service, by our parents and the church, as young Samuel was by his mother Hannah; and there we take a solemn vow, 'to forsake the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all the covetous desires of it; to forsake also the carnal desires of the flesh, and not to follow nor be led by them.' This vow we take when we be children, and understand it not; and how many are there, who know, and consider, and regard what they have vowed, when they are become men, almost as little as they did being children! Consider the lives and public actions of most men of all conditions, in court, city, and country, and then deny it, if you can, that those three things, which we have renounced in our baptism, the profits, honors, and pleasures of the world, are the very gods which divide the world amongst them; are served more devoutly, confided in more heartily, loved more affectionately, than the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose name we are baptised: deny, if you can, the daily and constant employment of all men to be either a violent prosecution of the vain pomp and glory of the world, or of the power, riches, and contemptible profits of it, or of the momentary or unsatisfying pleasures of the flesh, or else of the more

diabolical humors of pride, malice, revenge, and such-like; and yet with this empty form we please and satisfy ourselves, as well as if we were lively born again by the Spirit of God, not knowing or not regarding what St. Peter has taught us, that the baptism, which must save us, is, *not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience unto God*, 1 Pet. iii. 21.

When we are come to years capable of instruction, many, which is lamentable to consider, are so little regarded by themselves or others, that they continue little better than pagans in a commonwealth of Christians, and know little more of God, or of Christ, than if they had been bred in the Indies. A lamentable case, and which will one day lie heavy upon their account, which might have amended it, and did not. But many, I confess, are taught to act over this play of religion and learning, to say, *Our Father, which art in heaven*; and, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty;' but where are the men that live so, as if they did believe in earnest, that God is their Almighty Father? Where are they that fear him, and trust in him, and depend upon him only for their whole happiness, and love him, and obey him, as in reason we ought to do to an Almighty Father; who, if he be our Father, and we be indeed his children, will do for us all the good he can; and, if he be Almighty, can do for us all the good he will; and yet, how few are there, who love him with half that affection as children usually do their parents, or believe him with half that simplicity, or serve him with half that dili-

gence? And then, for the Lord's Prayer, the plain truth is, we lie unto God for the most part clean through it; and, for want of desiring indeed, what in word we pray for; tell him to his face as many false tales as we make petitions. For who shews by his endeavours, that he desires heartily that God's name should be hallowed, that is, holily and religiously worshipped and adored by all men? That his kingdom shall be advanced and enlarged; that his blessed will should be universally obeyed? Who shews, by his forsaking sin, that he desires, so much as he should do, the forgiveness of it? Nay, who doth not revenge, upon all occasions, the affronts, contempts, and injuries put upon him, and so upon the matter curse himself, as often as he says, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* How few depend upon God only for their *daily bread*, viz. the good things of this life, as upon the only Giver of them, so as neither to get nor keep any of them, by any means, which they know or fear to be offensive unto God? How few desire in earnest to avoid temptation? Nay, who almost is there, that takes not the devil's office out of his hand, and is not himself a tempter both to himself and others? Lastly, Who almost is there that desires heartily, and above all things, so much as the thing deserves, to be delivered from the greatest evil; sin, I mean, and the anger of God? Now, beloved, this is certain; he that employs not requisite industry, to obtain what he pretends to desire, does not desire indeed, but only pretends to do so: he that desires not what he prays for, **prays** with tongue only, and not with his **heart**; indeed, does not pray at all. And yet this is all which men generally do, and therefore herein also accomplish this prophecy, *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.*

And this were ill enough, were it in private; but we abuse God Almighty also with our public and solemn formalities; we make the church a stage whereon to act our parts, and play our pageantry; there we make a profession every day of confessing our sins 'with humble, lowly, and obedient hearts;' and yet, when we have talked after this manner, twenty, thirty, forty years together, our hearts for the most part continue as proud, as impenitent, as disobedient, as they were in the beginning. We make great protestations, 'when we

assemble and meet together to render thanks to God Almighty, for the benefits received at his hands;' and if this were to be performed with words, with hosannas and hallelujahs, and psalms, and hymns, and such-like outward matters, peradventure we should do it very sufficiently; but, in the mean time, with our lives and actions we provoke the Almighty, and that to his face, with all variety of grievous and bitter provocations; we do 'daily and hourly such things as we know, and he hath assured us, to be as odious unto him, and contrary to his nature, as any thing in the world is to the nature of any man in the world; and all this upon poor, trifling, trivial, no temptations. If a man, whom you have dealt well with, should deal so with you, one whom you had redeemed from slavery, and instated in some good inheritance, should make you fine speeches, entertain you with panegyrics, and have your praises always in his mouth; but all this while do nothing that pleases you, but, upon all occasions, put all affronts and indignities upon you: would you say this were a thankful man? Would you not detest him almost as much for his fair speeches as his foul actions? Beloved, such is our unthankfulness to our God and Creator, to our Lord and Saviour: our tongues ingeminate, and cry aloud, *Hosanna, hosanna*; but the louder voice of our lives and actions is, *Crucify him, crucify him.* We court God Almighty, and compliment with him, and profess to esteem his service perfect freedom; but if any thing be to be done, much more if any thing be to be suffered for him, here we leave him. We bow the knee before him, and put a reed in his hand, and a crown upon his head, and cry, *Hail, King of the Jews*: but then, with our customary sins, we *give him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink*; we *thrust a spear in his side, nail him to the cross, and crucify to ourselves the Lord of glory.* . . . To be thankful to God, is not to say, God be praised, or, God be thanked; but to remember what he desires, and execute what he commands. To be thankful to God, is certainly to love him, and to love him is to keep his commandments: so saith our Saviour, John xix., *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* If we do so, we may justly pretend to thankfulness; which, believe me, is not a word, nor to be performed with words: but, if we do not so,

as generally we do not, our talk of thankfulness is nothing else but mere talk, and we accomplish St. Paul's prophecy herein also; having a form of thankfulness, but not the reality, nor the power of it. If I should reckon up unto you, how many direct lies every wicked man tells to God Almighty as often as he says Amen to this *form of godliness*, which our church hath prescribed; if I should present unto you all our acting of piety, and playing of humiliation, and personating of devotion, in the psalms, the litanies, the collects, and generally in the whole service, I should be infinite.

CHILLINGWORTH.

The Worldly Man's notion of Religion exposed.

IT is amazing to think, with what vanity of mind the most weighty things of religion are entertained amongst Christians. Things that should swallow up our souls, drink up our spirits, are heard as a tale that is told; disregarded by most, scorned by too many. What can be spoken so important, or of so tremendous consequence, or of so confessed truth, or with so awful solemnity and premised mention of the sacred name of the Lord, as not to find either a very slight entertainment or contemptuous rejection; and this by persons avowing themselves Christians? We seem to have little or no advantage, in urging men upon their own principles, and with things they most readily and professedly assent to. Their hearts are as much untouched, and void of impression by the Christian doctrine, as if they were of another religion. How unlike is the Christian world to the Christian doctrine! The seal is fair and excellent, but the impression is languid, or not visible. Where is that serious godliness, that heavenliness, that purity, that spirituality, that righteousness, that peace, unto which the Christian religion is most aptly designed to work and form the spirits of men? We think to be saved by an empty name; and glory in the show and appearance of that, the life and power whereof we hate and deride. It is a reproach with us not to be called a Christian, and a greater reproach to be one. If such and such doctrines obtain not in our professed belief, we are heretics or infidels; if they do in our practice, we are precisians and fools. To be so serious, and circumspect, and strict, and holy, to make the practice of godliness so

much our business, as the known and avowed principles of our religion do plainly exact from us, (yea, though we come, as we cannot but do, unspeakably short of that required measure,) is to make one's self a common derision and scorn. Not to be professedly religious, is barbarous; to be so in good earnest, ridiculous. In other things, men are wont to act and practise according to the known rules of their several callings and professions, and he would be reckoned the common fool of the neighbourhood, that should not do so: the husbandman, that should sow when others reap, or contrive his harvest into the depth of winter, or sow fitches, and expect to reap wheat; the merchant, that should venture abroad his most precious commodities in a leaky bottom, without pilot or compass, or to places not likely to afford him any valuable return. In religion only it must be accounted absurd, to be and do according to its known agreed principles, and he a fool, that shall but practise as all about him profess to believe. Lord! whence is this apprehended inconsistency between the profession and practice of religion? what hath thus stupified and unmanned the world, that seriousness in religion should be thought the character of a fool? that men must visibly make a mockery of the most fundamental articles of faith, only to save their reputation, and be afraid to be serious, lest they should be thought mad! Were the doctrine here opened believed in earnest, were the due, proper impress of it upon our spirits, or (as the pagan moralist's expression is) were our minds transfigured into it; what manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness? But it is thought enough to have it in our creed, though never in our hearts; and such as will not deride the holiness it should produce, yet endeavour it not, nor go about to apply and urge truths upon their own souls to any such purpose. What should turn into grace, and spirit, and life, turns all into notion and talk; and men think all is well, if their heads be filled, and their tongues tipt, with what should transform their souls, and govern their lives. . . .

Thy words were found, and I did eat them, saith the prophet, and thy word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. Divine truth is only so far at present grateful, or useful for future, as it is received

by faith and consideration, and in the love thereof into the very heart, and there turned in *succum et sanguinem*—into real nutriment of the soul: so shall man live by the word of God. Hence is the application of it, both personal and ministerial, of so great necessity. If the truths of the Gospel were of the same alloy with some parts of philosophy, whose end is attained as soon as they are known; if the Scripture doctrine (the whole entire system of it) were not a doctrine after godliness; if it were not designed to sanctify and make men holy, or if the hearts of men did not reluctate, were easily receptive of its impressions; our work were as soon done, as such a doctrine were nakedly proposed: but the state of the case in these respects is known and evident. The tenor and aspect of Gospel-truth speaks its end; and experience too plainly speaks the oppositeness of men's spirits. All, therefore, we read and hear, is lost, if it be not urgently applied: the Lord grant it be not then too.

REV. JOHN HOWE.

The Modern False System of Morality.

I CANNOT forbear remarking a great change which has taken place in the whole manner of reason on the topics of morality and religion, from what prevailed in the last century, and, as far as my information extends, in any preceding age. This, which is an age of revolutions, has also produced a strange revolution in the method of viewing these subjects, the most important by far that can engage the attention of man. The simplicity of our ancestors, nourished by the sincere milk of the word, rather than by the tenets of a disputatious philosophy, was content to let morality remain on the firm basis of the dictates of conscience and the will of God. They considered virtue as something *ultimate*, as bounding the mental prospect. They never supposed for a moment there was any thing to which it stood merely in the relation of a *means*, or that within the narrow confines of this momentary state, any thing great enough could be found to be its *end* or *object*. It never occurred to their imagination, that that religion which professes to render us superior to the world, is in reality nothing more than an instrument to procure the temporal, the physical good of individuals, or of society. In their view it had a nobler

destination; it looked forward to eternity: and if ever they appear to have assigned it any end or object beyond itself, it was an union with its Author, in the perpetual fruition of God. They arranged these things in the following order:—Religion, comprehending the love, fear, and service of the Author of our being, they placed first; social morality, founded on its dictates, confirmed by its sanctions, next; and the mere physical good of society they contemplated as subordinate to both. Every thing is now reversed. The pyramid is inverted; the first is last, and the last first. Religion is degraded from its pre-eminence, into the mere handmaid of social morality; social morality into an instrument of advancing the welfare of society; and the world is all in all. Nor have we deviated less from the example of antiquity than from that of our pious forefathers. The philosophers of antiquity, in the absence of superior light, consulted with reverence the permanent principles of nature, the dictates of conscience, and the best feelings of the heart, which they employed all the powers of reason and eloquence to unfold, to adorn, to enforce; and thereby formed a luminous commentary *on the law written on the heart*. The virtue which they inculcated, grew out of the stock of human nature: it was a warm and living virtue. It was the moral man, possessing in every limb and feature, in all its figure and movements, the harmony, dignity, and variety which belong to the human form: an effort of unassisted nature to restore that image of God, which sin had mutilated and defaced. Imperfect, as might be expected, their morality was often erroneous; but in its great outlines it had all the stability of the human constitution, and its fundamental principles were coeval and coexistent with human nature. There could be nothing fluctuating and arbitrary in its more weighty decisions, since it appealed every moment to 'the man within the breast;' it pretended to nothing more than to give voice and articulation to the inward sentiments of the heart, and conscience echoed to its oracles. This, wrought into indifferent systems, and under various modes of illustration, was the general form which morality exhibited from the creation of the world till our time. In this state Revelation found it; and, correcting what was erroneous, supplying what was

defective, and confirming what was right by its peculiar sanctions, superadded a number of supernatural truths and holy mysteries. How is it, that on a subject on which men have thought deeply from the moment they began to think, and where, consequently, whatever is entirely and fundamentally new, must be fundamentally false, how is it that in contempt of the experience of past ages, and of all precedents human and divine, we have ventured into a perilous path which no eye has explored, no foot has trod; and have undertaken, after a lapse of six thousand years, to *manufacture* a morality of our own, to decide by a cold calculation of interest, by a ledger-book of profit and loss, the preference of truth to falsehood, of piety to blasphemy, and of humanity and justice to treachery and blood?

In the science of morals we are taught by this system to consider nothing as yet done; we are invited to erect a fresh fabric on a fresh foundation. All the elements and sentiments, which entered into the essence of virtue before, are melted down and cast into a new mould. Instead of appealing to any internal principle, every thing is left to calculation, and determined by expediency. In executing this plan, the jurisdiction of conscience is abolished, her decisions are classed with those of a superannuated judge, and the determination of moral causes is adjourned from the interior tribunal to the noisy forum of speculative debate. Every thing without exception is made an affair of calculation, under which are comprehended not merely the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures, but even the love and adoration which the Supreme Being claims at our hands. His claims are set aside, or suffered to lie in abeyance, until it can be determined how far they can be admitted on the principles of expediency, and in what respect they may interfere with the acquisition of temporal advantages. Even here, nothing is yielded to the suggestions of conscience, nothing to the movements of the heart: all is dealt out with a sparing hand, under the stint and measure of calculation. Instead of being allowed to love God with all our heart, and all our strength, the first and great commandment, the portion of love assigned him is weighed out with the utmost scrupulosity, and the supposed excess more severely censured than the real deficiency.

Thus, by a strange inversion, the *indirect influence* of Christianity, in promoting the temporal good of mankind, is mistaken for its *principal end*; the skirts of her robe are confounded with her body, and the *powers of the world to come*, instead of raising our thoughts and contemplations from earth to heaven, from the creature to the Creator, are made subservient to the advancement of secular interests and passions. How far these sentiments accord with the dictates of inspiration, the most unlettered Christian may easily decide. *Love not the world*, said the disciple who leaned on the breast of his Lord, *neither the things that are in the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.* Such was the idea entertained by an inspired Apostle of Christian virtue. Let us now turn to the modern philosopher. Virtue, he will inform us, (including the whole sum of our duties) is merely an expedient for promoting the interests and advantages of the present world, of that world, which, in the eyes of John, was passing away, and whose value he so solemnly depreciates. What admirable consistency! What elevated theology! If we can suppose this holy Apostle acquainted with what passes on earth, what pleasure it must afford his glorified spirit, to find his sentiments so well understood, and so faithfully interpreted!

In former times it was supposed that one of the most effectual means of improvement in virtue was, the moral culture of the heart; and *to keep it with all diligence, because out of it are the issues of life*, was thought an advice deserving the most serious attention. To examine frequently the state of the conscience, and to check the first risings of disorder there, was judged to be of the last importance.

It is easy to see how this moral discipline must fare under the doctrine of expediency, a doctrine which teaches man to be looking continually abroad: a doctrine which not only justifies, but enjoins a distrust of the suggestions of the inward monitor; which will not permit the best feelings of the heart, its clearest dictates, its finest emotions, to have the smallest influence over the conduct; and instead

of yielding any thing to their direction, cites them at its bar.

As this fashion of reducing every moral question to a calculation of expediency is a most important innovation, it would be strange if it had not produced a change in the manners of society. In fact it *has* produced an entirely new cast of character, equally remote from the licentious gaiety of high life, and the low profligacy which falls under the lash of the law: a race of men distinguished by a calm and terrible ferocity, resembling Cæsar in this only, that, as it was said of him, they have come with sobriety to the ruin of their country. The greatest crimes no longer issue from the strongest passions, but from the coolest head. Vice and impiety have made a new conquest, and have added the regions of speculation to their dominion. The patrons of impurity and licentiousness have put on the cloak of the philosopher: maxims the most licentious have found their way into books of pretended morality, and have been inculcated with the airs of a moral sage.* The new doctrine having withdrawn the attention from all internal sentiments as well as destroyed their authority, the distinction between right and wrong was easily lost sight of, the boundaries of vice and virtue confounded, and the whole substance of morals fell a prey to contending disputants. Nor is this the only or the worst consequence which has followed. A callous indifference to all moral distinctions is an almost inseparable effect of the familiar application of this theory. Virtue is no longer contemplated as the object of any particular *sentiment* or *feeling*, but solely with regard to its effects on society: it is what it *produces*, not what *it is*, that is alone considered, just as an accountant is indifferent to the *shape* and *appearance* of the figures, and attends simply to their amount. Crimes and virtues are equally *candidates* for approbation, nor must the heart betray the least preference, which would be to prejudge the cause: but must maintain a sacred neutrality till expedience, whose hand never trembles in the midst of the greatest horrors, has weighed in her impartial balance their consequences and effects. In the mean time, they are equally *candidates*, we repeat it again, for our approbation, and equally entitled to

it, provided the passions can be deceived into an opinion, and this is not difficult, that they will come to the same thing at the foot of the account. Hence that intrepidity in guilt, which has cased the hearts of the greatest adepts in this system, as with triple brass. Its seeds were sown by some of these with an unsparing hand in France, a congenial soil, where they produced a thick vegetation. The consequences were soon felt. The fabric of society tottered to its base, the earth shook under their feet, the heavens were involved in darkness, and a voice more audible than thunder called upon them to desist. But, unmoved amidst the uproar of elements, undismayed by that voice which astonishes nature and appals the guilty, these men continued absorbed in their calculations. Instead of revering the judgments, or confessing the finger of God, they only made more haste (still on the principle of expediency,) to desolate his works, and destroy his image, as if they were apprehensive the shades of a premature night might fall and cover their victims!

REV. R. HALL.

Christianity consists not in mere Morality and half Reformations.

IN the ordinary sacrifices of the old law, God was content to share part of them, with his servants the priests, and challenged only the inwards as his own due. And proportionably in the spiritual sacrifices, his claim was, *My son, give me thine heart*. He was tender then in exacting all his due. It was only a temptation, we know, when God required of Abraham, that his only son Isaac should be offered in *holocaustum*, for a whole burnt sacrifice, to be utterly consumed, so that no part nor relics should remain of so beloved a sacrifice; yet even in those old times, there were whole burnt-offerings; whereby (besides that one oblation of Christ) was prefigured likewise our giving up our whole selves, souls and bodies, as a living, reasonable sacrifice unto God. And, therefore, our Saviour Christ, (who came to fulfil the law, not only by his obedience thereto, but also by his perfect and complete expression of its force and meaning,) doth in plain terms resolutely and peremptorily exact from all them that purpose to follow him, a full, perfect resignation of themselves to his

* The unholy speculations of Mr. Godwin were founded entirely on this basis.

disposing, without all manner of condition or reservation.

This was a doctrine never heard of in the world before completely delivered. Never did any prophet or scribe urge or enforce so much upon God's people, as is herein contained. Yet, in the evangelical law, we have it precisely, and accurately pressed; insomuch, that the Holy Spirit of God has taken up almost all the metaphors that can possibly be imagined, the more forcibly to urge this so necessary a doctrine.

We are commanded so perfectly and wholly to devote ourselves to God's service; so earnestly and resolutely to undertake his commands, that we must determine to undervalue and despise all earthly and transitory things besides: nay, from the bottom of our hearts we must hate and detest all things (how gainful, or delightful, or necessary soever they seem), if they do in any measure hinder or oppugn us in our journey to Christ.

We must not so much as look upon Christ, or glance our eyes upon his glorious mercy, expressing in suffering and satisfying for us, (for St. Luke calls this *θεωπία*;) but we must resolve to keep them there fixed, and not deign to think any creature to be a spectacle worthy our looking on: *ἀφοροῦντες εἰς Ἰησοῦν*, saith St. Paul, Heb. xii. 2. We have no English term that can fully express the force of this word; for it is not only, as we have it translated, *looking unto Christ*, but taking off our speculations from other objects, and fastening them upon Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

When we have been once acquainted, though but imperfectly, with this saving knowledge, we must straight bring our understandings into captivity unto the obedience thereof; and whatsoever other speculations we have, how delightful soever they be unto us, yet rather than they should over-leaven us, and (as knowledge without charity is apt to do) puff us up, we must, with much greater care and industry, study to forget them, and resolve, with St. Paul, to know nothing, *save Jesus Christ and him crucified*.

CHILLINGWORTH.

Consider, that there may be some gradual tendencies, or fainter essays towards godliness, that fall short of real godliness, or come not up to that thorough change

and determination of heart God-ward, that is necessary to blessedness. There may be a returning, but not to the Most High, wherein man may be (as the prophet immediately subjoins, Hos. vii. 16.) *like a deceitful bow*, not fully bent, that will not reach the mark; they come not home to God. Many may be almost persuaded; and even within reach of heaven, not far from the kingdom of God; may seek to enter, and not be able; their hearts being somewhat inclinable, but more averse; for they can only be unable as they are unwilling. The soul is in no possibility of taking up a complacential rest in God, till it be brought to this, to move toward him spontaneously, and with, as it were, a self-motion. And then is it self-moved towards God, when its preponderating bent is towards him. As a massy stone that one attempts to displace, if it be heaved at till it preponderate, it then moves out by its own weight; otherwise it reverts, and lies where and as it did before. So it is with many men's hearts—all our lifting at them, is but the rolling of the returning stone; they are moved, but not removed; sometimes they are lifted at in the public ministry of the world; sometimes by a private, seasonable admonition; sometimes God makes an affliction his minister; a danger startles them; a sickness shakes them; and they think to change their course: but how soon do they change those thoughts, and are where they were? What enlightenings and convictions, what awakenings and terror, what remorse, what purposes, what tastes and relishes do some find in their own hearts, that yet are blasted and come to nothing? . . . No gracious principle but may have its counterfeit in an ungracious heart; whence they deceive not others only, but themselves, and think verily they are true converts while they are yet in their sins. How many wretched souls, that lie dubiously struggling a long time under the contrary alternate impressions of the Gospel on the one hand, and the present evil world on the other,—and give the day to their own sensual inclinations at last,—in some degree escape the corruptions of the world, by the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but are *again entangled and overcome, so as their latter end is worse than their beginning*, 2 Pet. ii. 20. Such a man is so far from being advantaged by his former faint inclinations towards God, that he would be

found at last under this aggravated wickedness beyond all other men; that when others wandered from God through inadvertency and inconsideration, this man will be found to have been his enemy upon deliberation, and against the various strivings of his convinced heart to the contrary. This is more eminently victorious and reigning enmity; such a one takes great pains to perish. Alas! it is not a slight touch, an overly superficial tincture, some evanid sentiments of piety, a few good thoughts or wishes, that bespeak a new man, a new creature. It is a thorough prevailing change, that quite alters the habitual posture of a man's soul, and determines it towards God, so as that the after-course of his life may be capable of that denomination, a living to God, a living after the Spirit; that exalts the love of God unto that supremacy in him, that it becomes the governing principle of his life, and the reason and measure of his actions; that as he loves him above all things else, better than his own life, so he can truly (though possibly sometimes with a doubtful, trembling heart) resolve the ordinary course of his daily walking and practice into that love, as the directive principle of it. I pray, I read, I hear, because I love God. I desire to be just, sober, charitable, meek, patient, because I love God. This is the perfection and end of the love of God, (therefore that must needs be the principle hereof) obedience to his will, 1 John ii. 5. Herein appears that power of godliness, denied (God knows) by too many that have the form: *the spirit of love, power, and of a sound mind*, 2 Tim. iii. 5; chap. i. 7. That only is a sound mind, in which such love rules in such power.

REV. JOHN HOWE.

People in general hold, that all religion consists in mere practice, or in works; and that Christianity is comprised in good works, or, at least, that this doctrine of morality is the principal part, and even the foundation of religion. These maxims are very plausible. Upon this ground faith, knowledge, and prophecy, are represented as qualities totally useless, without deeds of charity. The most ignorant become great orators on such occasions, and declaim elegantly in praise of good works, which, indeed, cannot be too much recommended; but, this enormous error, of making religion a mere doctrine of moral-

ity, is of much greater consequence than they imagine. The doctrine of religion consists of two parts; the former shews what God hath done for man—the latter teaches what man ought to do for God. This first part is the genuine and essential character which distinguishes the Christian religion from all others, for there is no false religion which does not teach good works. But to teach what God hath done for us in the work of Redemption, is a doctrine to be found in the Christian religion alone. The real essence of Christianity lies in this first part; for all other religions teach salvation by the works of man toward God, but our religion teaches salvation, as the work of God toward man.

The greatest corruption, that hath ever crept into the church, began with the use of these maxims, which recommend moral doctrine as the whole substance of religion. For Christianity was thus ultimately reduced to morality. If we observe the consequences of divers opinions lately introduced, it will appear that they all terminate in this point.

It is impious to affirm that the doctrine of works is the foundation of religion; for salvation, which is the true subject of religion, is grounded upon the good which God bestows upon us, not upon the good that we do. Hence it follows, that morality is not the fundamental doctrine of Christianity: on the contrary, that part of it which we call morality, is built upon the grace of God. It is, therefore, a very rash assertion to maintain, that the doctrine which treats of morals, is the most excellent part of religion. All Christian virtues are effects of Sanctification, which is a work of God. Without salvation, which is the first part, all our morality is dark and heathenish. It is a great error to believe, that to be a good moralist is sufficient to be a good Christian.

It is a prejudice natural to man, in speaking of the means of obtaining salvation, to think immediately of works, as the real efficient cause of it. The Jews, taking this for granted, asked our Saviour about the nature only of works, John vi. 28. All men, except Christians, ground their hopes upon works, not being able to conceive any other merit as the means of salvation. This principle is natural, having been engraven on the heart of man, from his creation, namely, that he should obtain eternal life by his works; which was

true in the state of innocence; for works then would have produced this effect, if man had not lost his strength. And he still rests upon that principle, of which he has retained the impression, though the fall, having deprived him of strength, discovers to him plainly the vanity of his pretensions. This source did not merely give rise to the opinions which attribute salvation to the efficacy of works, but also to the vulgar ideas of such, who, though they acknowledge the insufficiency of works in this respect, yet raise their value so highly, as even to think it more excellent to preach modesty in apparel, than to teach the mysteries of the Gospel.

J. DESPAGNE.

There is a religion which is too sincere for hypocrisy, but too transient to be profitable; too superficial to reach the heart, too unproductive to proceed from it. It is slight, but, as far as it goes, not false. It has discernment enough to distinguish sin, but not firmness enough to oppose it; compunction sufficient to soften the heart, but not vigour sufficient to reform it. It laments when it does wrong, and performs all the functions of repentance of sin except forsaking it. It has every thing of devotion except the stability, and gives every thing to religion except the heart. This is a religion of times, events, and circumstances; it is brought into play by accidents, and dwindles away with the occasion which called it out. Festivals and fasts, which occur but seldom, are much observed, and it is to be feared, *because* they occur but seldom; while the great festival which comes every week, comes too often to be so respectfully treated. The piety of these people comes out much in sickness, but is apt to retreat again as recovery approaches. If they die, they are placed by their admirers in the Saints' Calendar; if they recover, they go back into the world they had renounced, and again suspend their amendment, as often as Death suspends his blow.

There is another class whose views are still lower, who yet cannot so far shake off religion, as to be easy without retaining its brief and stated forms, and who contrive to mix up these forms with a faith of a piece with their practice. They blend their inconsistent works with a vague and unwarranted reliance on what the Saviour has done for them, and thus patch up a

merit and a propitiation of their own—running the hazard of incurring the danger of punishment by their lives, and inventing a scheme to avert it by their creed. Religion never interferes with their pleasures, except by the compliment of a short and occasional suspension. Having got through these periodical acts of devotion, they return to the same scenes of vanity and idleness which they had quitted for the temporary duty; forgetting that it was the very end of those acts of devotion to cure the vanity and to correct the idleness. Had the periodical observance answered its true design, it would have disinclined them to the pleasure instead of giving them a dispensation for its indulgence. Had they used the devout exercise in a right spirit, and improved it to its true end, it would have set the heart and life at work on all those pursuits which it was calculated to promote. But their project has more ingenuity. By the stated minutes they give to religion, they cheaply purchase a protection for the mis-employment of the rest of their time. They make these periodical devotions a kind of spiritual insurance office, which is to make up to the adventurers in pleasure, any loss or damage which they may sustain in its voyage.

It is of these shallow devotions, these presumed equivalents for a new heart and a new life, that God declares, by the prophet, that he is *weary*. Though of his own express appointment, they become an *abomination* to him, as soon as the sign comes to be rested in for the thing signified. We Christians have *our new moons and our sacrifices*, under other names and other shapes; of which sacrifices, that is, of the spirit in which they are offered, the Almighty has said, *I cannot away with them, they are iniquity*. MRS. H. MORE.

There can be no true Religion without vital Union with Christ.

It is from hence that we see so much cold and inanimate religion in the world, because it has no connexion with the Lord Jesus. He is the source of all light and vital warmth. That religion which is not derived from him, which has not respect to him, which is not supported by faith in him, and communication from him, is not the work of his own Spirit, and partakes not of his divine nature; it has but the influence of a moon-light profession, and is

but a shadow which soon passeth away. True religion in the heart, arises from a vital union with Christ, is a practical receiving out of his fulness; and thus the Christian feels, and discovers all around, the transforming efficacy of his beams: it is the love of Christ manifested to the soul, producing love to Christ, and thus rendering the believer fruitful in every good word and work. Standing at the cross, that wonderful scene of love, the believer receives, by faith, the beams of pardoning mercy, and the soul kindles into holy affections, increasing with the growing discoveries of his boundless grace. Is this our religion? If not—if our profession neither warms our own hearts, nor spreads its influence and its benefits around us—is it any wonder that there should be no power, nor joy, nor consolation in it? The religion of Jesus is of a very different nature: it is not only the brightness of light, but the warmth of love. May this religion be ours! REV. W. GOODE.

General Thoughts about Religion insufficient.

I BELIEVE we are often much deceived by general thoughts about religious matters without descending to particulars. General thoughts about things keep them at a distance from us; whilst particular thoughts bring them home to the heart. General thoughts about denying ourselves and living to God, are attended with no difficulty; but when we descend to particulars, and think of denying ourselves in this or that thing, then the difficulty occurs. So also a general knowledge of ourselves as sinners, and of the corruption of our nature, is wholly inefficacious and unhumbling; it is not felt, and leaves no useful impression on the heart. It is the same with respect to Christ and his salvation. We have no value for them until we apply them to the particular exigencies of the soul. When urgent and particular necessity calls with pressing importunity for Christ and his grace, then they are esteemed and applied as they are intended by the Almighty. Christ is too often looked upon more as a physician to resort to in a future time of sickness, than as one to whom we have daily need to apply, and on whose skill and care we depend every moment for the health of soul we enjoy. I have known many who thus rested in generalities all their days. But I never knew one of them who seemed to

make any progress in the divine life. They knew the doctrines of the Gospel well enough, and led very decent lives; and many have felt, at their first awakenings, something of the efficacy of divine truths; but nothing afterwards was to be seen, all seemed to have evaporated and become lost.

REV. T. CHARLES.

Means of Grace do not constitute Grace.

Is it so, that no outward privilege, dignity, or excellency, is of any account in God's sight, nor doth make holy or pleasing to him? Oh, then, judge not of God's favour by the outward fashion of the person of any man; deem not such a man holy or highly favoured of God, because he is increased in wealth, honour in the world, or the like: do not thou so judge of thyself, think not highly of thyself in regard of birth, honour, wealth, favour, or any outward excellency whatsoever; it is not any of these, or the like, that doth commend thee to God, and make thee pleasing to him. Thou art, indeed, to praise God for any excellency or preferment he hath vouchsafed unto thee; and, having assurance of God's favour in Christ, thou mayest lawfully enjoy it; for God gives to his children, together with the outward blessing, joy in the fruition and use of it, Eccl. v. 18. 19: but yet take heed thou boast not thyself, and lift not up thyself in that respect with God, as if that outward good thing did make thee pleasing to God; no, no; remember it, it is not any outward preferment whatsoever, no, not in religion, that in itself makes thee holy and pleasing to God. It was the conceit of the people of God in ancient time, that they were highly in God's favour, because they had God's temple, and his outward worship amongst them; they cried out, *the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*, Jer. vii. 4. And is it not the conceit of too many in our days?—do not many bless themselves, and think themselves highly in God's favour, only because they have been baptised, and they enjoy the ministry of the word, and are made partakers of the outward sacrament? Oh, deceive not thyself, whosoever thou art: these things, as they are only outward privileges which thou enjoyest, and haply others want, do not make thee holy and pleasing to God, or nearer to heaven; no, thou mayest have and enjoy these, and perish—yea, they may be to thee seals of deeper condemnation. Ever think on it, that it is not any outward privilege, no, not

in religion, that can of itself make thee pleasing to God; and therefore do not lift up thyself in regard of the fruition of outward privileges of religion; never rest till thou have further assurance of God's favour, than the enjoyment and outward use of them. REV. E. ELTON.

Discrimination between a false and true Profession.

PROFESSING Christ, is not confessing him; for to profess Christ is one thing—to confess Christ is another. Confession is a living testimony for Christ, in a time when religion suffers; profession may be only a lifeless formality, in a time when religion prospers. To confess Christ, is to choose his ways, and own them. To profess Christ, is to plead for his ways, and yet live beside them. Profession may be from a feigned love to the ways of Christ; but confession is from a rooted love to the person of Christ.

To profess Christ, is to own him when none deny him; to confess Christ, is to plead for him, and suffer for him, when others oppose him. Hypocrites may be professors; but the martyrs are the true confessors. Profession is a swimming down the stream. Confession is a swimming against the stream. Now many may swim with the stream, like the dead fish, that cannot swim against the stream with the living fish. Many may profess Christ, that cannot confess Christ; and so, notwithstanding their profession, yet are but almost Christians. MATT. MEAD.

Discrimination between a false and true Hope.

A MAN may have great hopes of Heaven, great hopes of being saved, and yet be but almost a Christian.

Indeed there is a hope of Heaven which is *the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast*, Heb. vi. 19: it never miscarries, and it is known by four properties.

First, it is a hope that purifies the heart, purges out sin; *he that hath this hope, purifies himself even as God is pure*, 1 John iii. 3. That soul that truly hopes to enjoy God, truly endeavours to be like God.

Secondly, it is a hope which fills the heart with gladness: *we rejoice in hope of the glory of God*, Rom. v. 2; Ps. cxxx. 5.

Thirdly, it is a hope that is founded upon the promise: as there can be no true faith

without a promise, so, nor any true hope: faith applies the promise, and hope expects the fulfilling the promise: faith relies upon the truth of it, and hope waits for the good of it: faith gives interest, hope expects lively and seisin.

Fourthly, it is a hope that is wrought by God himself in the soul; who is therefore called *the God of hope*, Rom. xv. 13, as being the Author as well as the Object of hope. Now he that hath this hope shall never miscarry: this is a right hope; the hope of the true believer *Christ in you, the hope of glory*.

But then, as there is a true and sound hope, so there is a false and rotten hope; and this is much more common. . . .

There is nothing more common, than to see men big with groundless hopes of Heaven: as,

1. A man may have great hope that hath no grace; you read of the *hope of hypocrites*.

The performance of duties is a proof of their hope; the foolish virgins would never have done what they did, had they thought they should have been shut out after all. Many professors would not be, at such pains in duties as they are, if they did not hope for Heaven. Hope is the great motive to action: despair cuts the sinews of all endeavours. . . . So that there may be great hope where there is no grace; experience proves this: formal professors are men of no grace, but yet men of great hopes; nay, many times you shall find that none fear more about their eternal condition, than they that have most cause of hope; and none hope more than they that have most cause of fear. As interest in hope may sometimes be without hope, so hope in God may be without interest.

2. A man may hope in the mercy, and goodness, and power of God, without eyeing the promise; and this is the hope of most: God is full of mercy and goodness, and therefore willing to save; and he is infinite in power, and therefore able to save; why therefore should I not rest on him?

Now it is presumption, and therefore sin, to hope in the mercy of God, otherwise than by eyeing the promise; for the promise is the channel of mercy, the pipe through which it is conveyed: all the blessedness the saints enjoy in Heaven, is no other than what is the fruit of promise relied on, and hoped for here on earth. A man hath no

warrant to hope in God, but by virtue of the promise.

3. A man may hope for Heaven, and yet not cleanse his heart, nor depart from his secret sins; that hope of salvation that is not accompanied with heart-purification, that is a vain hope.

4. A man may hope for Heaven, and yet be doing the work of hell; he may hope for salvation, and yet be working out his own damnation, and so perish in his confidences. This is the case of many, *Male agendo sperant, et sperando pereunt*; like the waterman, that looks one way, and rows another; many have their eyes on Heaven, whose hearts are in the earth; they hope in God, but choose him not for a portion; they hope in God, but do not love him as the best good, and therefore are like to have no portion in him, nor good by him; but are like to perish without him, notwithstanding all their hopes: *What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God takes away his soul?* MATT. MEAD.

Attendance on the Ordinances no proof of Religious Principle.

It is not easy to lay open the utter nakedness of the natural heart in reference to God; or to convince the possessor of it, that under the guise of his many plausibilities, there may lurk that which gives to sin all its hideousness. The mere man of ordinances cannot acquiesce in what he reckons to be the exaggerations of orthodoxy upon this subject; nor can he at all conceive how it is possible that, with so much of the semblance of godliness about him, there should, at the same time, be within him the very opposite of godliness. It is, indeed, a difficult task to carry upon this point the conviction of him who positively loves the Sabbath, and to whom the chime of its morning bells brings the delightful associations of peace and of sacredness,—who has his hours of prayer, at which he gathers his family around him, and his hours of attendance on that house where the man of God deals out his weekly lessons to the assembled congregation. It may be in vain to tell him, that God in fact is a weariness to his heart, when it is attested to him by his own consciousness,—that, when the preacher is before him, and the people are around him, and the professed object of their coming together is to join

in the exercise of devotion, and to grow in the knowledge of God, he finds in fact that all is pleasantness,—that his eye is not merely filled with the public exhibition, and his ear regaled by the impressiveness of a human voice, but that the interest of his heart is completely kept up by the succession and variety of the exercises. It may be in vain to tell him, that this religion of taste, or this religion of habit, or this religion of inheritance, may utterly consist with the deep and the determined worldliness of all his affections,—that he whom he thinks to be the God of his Sabbath is not the God of his week; but that, throughout all the successive days of it, he is going astray after the idols of vanity, and living without God in the world. This is demonstration enough of all his forms, and all his observations, being a mere surface display, without a living principle of piety. But perhaps it may serve more effectually to convince him of it, should we ask him, how his godliness thrives in the closet, and what are the workings of his heart, in the abstract and solitary hour of intercourse, with the unseen Father. In church, there may be much to interest him, and to keep him alive. But when alone, and deserted by all the accompaniments of a solemn assembly, we should like to know with what vivacity he enters on the one business of meditating on God, and holding converse with God. Is the sense of the all-seeing and ever-present Deity enough for him; and does love to God brighten and sustain the moments of solitary prayer? The mind may have enough to interest it in church; but does the secret exercise of fellowship with the Father bring no distaste, and no weariness along with it? Is it any thing more than the homage of a formal presentation? And when the business of devotion is thus unpeopled of all its externals, and of all its accessaries; when thus reduced to a naked exercise of spirit, can you appeal to the longings, and the affections of that spirit, as the essential proof of your godliness? And do you never, on occasions like this, discover that which is in your hearts, and detect their enmity to him who formed them? Do you afford no ground for the complaint which he uttered of old, when he said, *Have I been a wilderness unto Israel, and a land of darkness?* And do you not perceive that with this direction of your feelings and your desires

away from the living God, though you be outwardly clean, as by the operation of snow water, he may plunge you in the ditch, and make your own clothes to abhor you? DR. CHALMERS.

False Liberality or Indifference in the cause of Religion an affront to God.

It is almost incredible, that those who do believe their religion, should be so indifferent what men believe, so careless to understand what they believe themselves, so unconcerned to maintain and propagate the true Christian faith, and to maintain a just reverence and veneration for it.

What can such men think of our Saviour's appearance in human nature, if they do really believe it? Did the eternal Son of God take human nature, and live and converse in this world as a man, preach the Gospel, work miracles, die upon the cross, rise again from the dead, and visibly ascend up into heaven, to do nothing but what might as well have been left undone; what is not worth any great pains to understand; what we may believe, or not believe, without any danger; what is fit to be ridiculed, or not worth defending if it be? Is not this a greater affront to the wisdom and goodness of God, and to the love and condescension of our Saviour, than to deny that there ever was such a person as Christ in the world? Is not an infidel, who ridicules the Christian faith, much more innocent than a Christian who can patiently hear it ridiculed? Were there no other proof of what great concernment the Christian faith is, we need no other than that God sent his only and eternal Son to preach the Gospel; and certainly so great a Person did not come upon a needless errand. But when we consider what it is the Gospel teaches, no less than how to obtain eternal happiness, and how to avoid eternal miseries; to believe this, and to believe it with lukewarmness and indifference; atheists and infidels themselves must despise, as the most stupid and contemptible folly: for it is to be indifferent and unconcerned about the most concerning matters in the world, which at best argues a very trifling spirit; and, besides the affront to God and to our Saviour, it makes faith itself useless to all the purposes of religion; for men who are so indifferent about their faith, will have no great zeal in the practice of reli-

gion. I know this is very often excused and justified with the pretence of moderation and Christian charity, of a quiet and peaceable temper, which will not damn men, nor quarrel with their neighbours for every difference in opinion: nay, the popular cry of liberty of conscience itself is pressed to serve this cause. But how great virtues soever these may be thought, it is certain men very much mistake them, when moderation shuts out all zeal for God, and our most holy faith; when charity for men excludes all concernment for their souls; when men are so tame and gentle as not to contend, *and contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints*; and when liberty of conscience is turned into a liberty to reject and laugh at all the articles and mysteries of the Christian faith, and to profess and propagate, and that without any moderation, the most damnable heresies. DR. W. SHERLOCK.

On the term "Righteous overmuch."

Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise; why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked; neither be thou foolish; why shouldst thou die before thy time? It is good that thou shouldst take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thy hand: for he that feareth God, shall come forth of them all.

Persons who relish not nor study the word of God as a whole, have often particular parts of it which they like; favourite texts, such as, when severed from their connexion, and regarded in their sound rather than their sense, appear to suit their preconceived opinions and prevalent desires. These little insulated scraps of Scripture, misunderstood and perverted, and applied to purposes the very opposite of the Divine intention, obtain a free currency amongst multitudes of people, many of whom perhaps never read them in their Bibles, but have got them at second-hand as maxims of high authority; and they are quoted on all occasions, and referred to with the easy confidence of a geometer quoting his axioms. In this, and in many other ways, the word of God meets with treatment, which would be represented as an insult by any human author; being made to express sentiments in perfect contrariety to its general spirit, and even to its most explicit declarations.

Few texts (perhaps I might say none)

have ever been in such general favour, have ever been caught at, and circulated, and appealed to with approbation, by so great a variety of characters, as the first clause of the sixteenth verse, *Be not righteous overmuch*.—Its grand recommendation lies in its being so *undefined*, susceptible of so many shades of meaning; prescribing no precise boundaries, but leaving matters conveniently at large, and thus affording latitude for every man to fix his own standard, (and even that may be very fluctuating,) and then to appeal to Scripture against all who go beyond him, as exceeding reasonable bounds, and being *righteous overmuch*. For it is surprising how men, who hate and disregard the Bible in its great truths and requirements, will yet quote its words, nay, even plead for its authority, when it can be made, by any perversion, to accord with their own inclinations.

The saying is a favourite one with the profligate, who, in cursing the enthusiasm and hypocrisy of others, vainly fancies that he is vindicating his own vice and folly; and who reckons it quite a sufficient reason for rejecting with scorn a serious and salutary advice, that it comes from one whom all must allow to be—*righteous overmuch*.

Often, on the other hand, is it appealed to by the man of morality, who, with stern severity, condemns the profligate, but who piques himself on his own sobriety, honesty, industry, kindness, and general decency of character; and, making this external virtue his religion, though without a single sentiment or emotion of inward godliness, considers every thing beyond it as being—*righteous overmuch*.

Many, who are equally destitute of the true spirit of religion, who feel its services an irksome drudgery, whose secret language in them all is, 'What a weariness is it!' and who therefore satisfy their consciences with very flimsy apologies for the neglect of them, are ever ready to pronounce those *righteous overmuch*, who cannot see their excuses in the same satisfactory light with themselves.

This admonition too is a weapon in constant use with the thousands, whose religion consists in the strict observance of its outward forms, in their appropriate times and places. They would not for the world be missed out of their pew on a Sunday, and with even greater reluctance

on certain days of human institution. But they are clear for keeping religion to its proper place. This is a topic on which they continually insist; a species of *propriety* which, in company, with a smile of self-complacency, is for ever on their lips. It is all well, if a man minds religion on its own appropriate day, and attends to his business the rest of the week. These things must not be made to clash. *Six days shalt thou labour, and one thou shalt rest*, are God's own prescriptions;—and the Bible itself enjoins us not to be—*righteous overmuch*.

But there are none to whom this favourite caution is of more essential service, than those professors of religion, of whom, alas! the number is not small, who, disliking *the offence of the cross*, are desirous to keep on good terms with both Christ and the world, and who cover from others, and try to cover from themselves, the real principle of their conduct, by prudential maxims of imposing plausibility, and some of them in the terms of Scripture. The wisdom of the serpent, they say, is recommended to us, as well as the harmlessness of the dove. They cannot see the use of exposing themselves and their religion to needless derision. They are ever mightily afraid, lest, by the overstrictness and uncomplying spirit of its professors, men should be led to form gloomy notions of the Gospel, as a system of morose and puritanical austerity. 'We must needs go out of the world,' they allege, 'if we are to take no part in its pleasures.' Under the pretext of recommending religion, such persons meet the world half-way; they join in its follies and vain amusements; they rather court than shun its intercourse; and they sanction their unseemly compliances by an appeal to the admonition before us; regarding the reproach cast upon others, who think a more decided and marked separation from the world their duty, as brought upon themselves by their own imprudence,—by *carrying matters too far*,—by being *righteous overmuch*.

A passage of Scripture that has been so much abused, and of which the abuse is so extensively prejudicial, it is of great importance rightly to understand: and, before noticing any of the different views that have been taken of it, I shall state what to me appears to be its true meaning.

The whole passage seems to be an in-

stance of serious and impressive IRONY : of which the subject is, the line of conduct most prudent to be pursued, supposing the end in view to be the securing of favour, honour, and prosperity in the world. Thus:—*There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness.* If, therefore, you wish to avoid the enmity of the world, with its mischievous and sometimes deadly consequences, and to ensure favour, success, honour, and long life,—*be not righteous overmuch*:—remember that religion is a matter, in which men, in general, are particularly fond of moderation; and beware of assuming an appearance of sanctity greater than the world is disposed to approve of, or to bear with. *Neither make thyself otherwise; why shouldst thou destroy thyself?* Recollect, that the same feelings of envy and malignant jealousy may be excited, as they very often have been, by high degrees of superior intelligence and wisdom. Be not obtrusive, therefore, with your eminent endowments. Deal prudently. Be cautious of exasperating the jealous pride of others. Besides the risks that arise from envy, such qualities may bring you often into the critical situation of an arbitrator; in which you must unavoidably expose yourself to the resentment of one or other of the parties, and possibly even of both. And from various other sources, danger may arise to you.—But, at the same time, beware. Similar effects may be produced by opposite causes. Although men do not like overmuch religion, you must be on your guard, on the other hand, against the extreme of wickedness:—*be not overmuch wicked.* You will expose yourself to suspicion and hatred, as a dangerous member of society: men will become your enemies from fear, and will think they confer a benefit on the community, by making riddance of you: nay, in the excess of riotous and unbridled profligacy, you may be betrayed into deeds which may awaken the vengeance of human laws, and bring you to an untimely end. Let prudent consideration, then, set bounds to your licentiousness. —*Neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?* As there are hazards attending high pretensions to wisdom, so are there risks peculiar to folly. The absolute fool becomes the object of contempt. His life is hardly thought

worth an effort, far less a sacrifice, for its preservation. The fool is easily made the tool and the dupe of a party; exposing himself to be the prey of virulent enemies, or of selfish pretended friends. Folly leads a man into innumerable scrapes. It may induce him heedlessly to mix with wicked associates, and may thus, as indeed has many a time happened, occasion his suffering from crimes, in the perpetration of which he had no active hand, and which, fool as he is, he would shrink from committing. And in numberless ways he may come, by his folly, to *die before his time.*—If, therefore, I repeat, your object be to shun the world's enmity, with its possible and probable effects, and to secure the world's favour, with its desirable accompaniments and consequences, take care of these extremes:—as *there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness,—be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?* and though *a wicked man may,* and sometimes does, *prolong his life in his wickedness,* yet *be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?*

All Scripture irony is serious, and intended to impress on the mind important lessons. The passage is, in this respect, similar to that striking one towards the close of the book: *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes:—BUT KNOW THOU, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* So here, the admonition closes with an impressive recommendation of the fear of the Lord, as the best and only means of inspiring true peace and tranquil security of mind, as a sovereign antidote against the fear of man, and a powerful incentive to the faithful and firm discharge of duty in every situation:—*It is good that thou shouldst take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thy hand: for HE THAT FEARETH GOD, SHALL COME FORTH OF THEM ALL.* Eccles. vii. 18.

It is good,—supremely good and advantageous, *that thou shouldst lay hold on this,*—that is, on what I am now about to mention; *yea, also from this withdraw not thy hand,*—that is, let this antidote against the perils of an evil world, and against the fear of man, which so often

brings a snare, be the subject of thy constant and attentive remembrance, the object of thy supreme and unceasing desire, and of thine unabating endeavours after its thorough attainment and its permanent influence ;—*for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.* Instead of adopting any of the maxims, or following any of the schemes, of a carnal policy and worldly wisdom, *be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long : sanctify the Lord God in your heart ; let him be your fear, and let him be your dread : and He shall be for a sanctuary.* He shall be thy fortress and strong tower ; so that thou shalt not need to be afraid of what man can do unto thee. *Thou shalt dwell on high ; and thy place of defence shall be the munition of rocks. He that dwelleth in the*

secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress ; my God, in him will I trust. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust : his truth shall be thy shield and buckler, Psal. xci. 1, 2, 4. *Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear him, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.* Matt. x. 28-31.

DR. WARDLAW.

SECTION II.—WHAT GENUINE RELIGION IS.

Christ the only entrance into vital Practical Religion.

THERE is no entrance into any vital practical religion but by Christ, and by faith in him. That religion that does not place him as the beginning, that is not entirely dependent upon him for all its supplies, that does not place his glory as the end of all, is not of God. Yea, it is contrary to the plain declarations of his word ; it arises from an ignorance of Scripture truth, a misapprehension of the evil of sin, and our sinful state ; it rests upon a wrong foundation, proceeds upon false principles, and is directed to a wrong end. Plausible it may be in its appearances, and beneficial in its effects upon those around us, but can never be acceptable in the sight of God. The true believer traces back all his religious exercises and duties to the grace of Christ, and of his Spirit, as their source ; he expects their acceptance only through the merits of his blood, and the prevalence of his intercession ; and acknowledges his glory as the only proper end of all. The more abundant, therefore, the fruits of grace are in his heart and life, the more he feels indebted to him who is the Giver of all, and without whom he daily feels he can do nothing. Repentance and faith, the first steps in the Christian course, those special graces upon the possession and exercise of which all other covenant blessings

are suspended, were the purchase of his blood, and are the gifts of his hand. He is exalted *to give repentance*, and is the *author and finisher of faith*. Here begins all practical Christianity : thus it is carried forward by the faith of Jesus, and is therefore called in its several branches, with the utmost propriety, the *living by faith*, the *obedience of faith*. This, then, is the only rule whereby we may judge with safety of our religious exercises, whether they spring from nature or grace ; whether they are the genuine effects of the grace of the Spirit, or the mere selfish efforts of an unregenerate heart, destitute of the faith of Jesus, and the love of God. Let us, then, faithfully *examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith*, and whether Jesus, our HOPE OF GLORY, BE IN US. Our most specious services, unconnected with him, will leave us under guilt, and therefore leave us to perish. But the grace that flows *from him*, shall lead effectually to him, and bring the believing sinner to the complete enjoyment of all the purchased blessings of his cross and ransom. *All things are ours, if we are Christ's ; for Christ is God's.*

The sweet influences flowing from Christ, confirm the understanding in the knowledge of truth, establish the faith, and strengthen the hope of the believer, and thus give a holy consistency to his profession, a firmness to his resolution, and a

consistency to his obedience. That practical morality which is not derived from him, while it is deficient in its principle, is always uncertain in its exercises: it wants the energy of faith, the animation of hope, and the ardour of love; these spring alone from union with Jesus, and are supported by the continual communication from his fulness, who is *the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification, and redemption of his people*. The prayer of faith derives the blessing, while it supplicates to be *strengthened mightily by his Spirit in the inner man*. Then there is a mighty strength of humiliation, a mighty strength of faith, of hope, of love, of joy, and of consolation; and the joy of the Lord becomes the practical strength of every Christian grace. While Jesus dwells in the heart by faith, *the believer is filled with all the fulness of God*; this is the great secret of the Christian life: then, *though weak, we are strong*; though we can do nothing, yet we can do all things through Christ strengthening us. The knowledge and experience of the love and grace of Jesus fortifies against temptation, subdues the power of inward corruption, and affords not only the most powerful motive, but the most effectual influence in forwarding the sanctification of the heart and conduct. Then alone am I conscious of spiritual strength, when, emptied of self, *I am deriving all out of his fulness* for every purpose of the Christian life, and when I feel that *in Jehovah I have righteousness and strength*.

REV. W. GOODE.

Holiness the leading feature and end of Christianity.

CHRIST did not take all those pains to lay aside his robes of glory, and come down hither into the world; to enter into a virgin's womb, to be born in our human shape, and be laid a poor crying infant in a manger, and, having no *form or comeliness* at all upon him, to take upon him the *form of a servant*, to undergo a reproachful and ignominious life, and at last to be abandoned to a shameful death, a death upon the cross; I say, he did not do all this merely to bring in a *notion* into the world, without producing any real substantial effect at all, without the changing, mending, and reforming of the world; so that men should still be as wicked as they were before, and as much under the power

of the prince of darkness, only they should not be thought so; they should still remain as full of all the filthy sores of sin and corruption as before. only they should be *accounted* whole. Shall God come down from heaven, and pitch a tabernacle amongst men? Shall he undertake such a huge design, and make so great a noise of doing something, which, when it is all summed up, shall not at last amount to a reality? Surely Christ did not undergo all this to so little purpose; he would not take all this pains for us that he might be able at last to put into our hands nothing but a blank? Is the great design that was so long carried in the womb of eternity now proved abortive, or else nothing but a mere windy birth? No, surely—the end of the Gospel is life and perfection, it is a divine nature, it is a God-like frame and disposition of spirit; it is to make us partakers of the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, without which salvation itself were but a notion.

Christ came into the world to make an expiation and atonement for our sins; but the end of this was, that we might *eschew* sin, that we might forsake *all ungodliness and worldly lusts*. The Gospel declares pardon of sin to those that are *heavy laden* with it, and willing to be disburthened, to this end—that it might quicken and enliven us to new obedience. Whereas, otherwise, the guilt of sin might have detained us in horror and despair, and so have kept us still more strongly under the power of it, in sad and dismal apprehensions of God's wrath provoked against us, and inevitably falling on us. But Christ hath now appeared like a *day-star*, with most cheerful beams: nay, he is the *Sun of Righteousness* himself, which hath risen upon the world with his healing wings, with his exhilarating light, that he might chase away all those black despairing thoughts from us. But Christ did not rise that we should play, and sport, and wantonize with his light; but that we should do the work of the day in it; that we should walk *εὐσχημόνως* (as the Apostle speaketh), not in our night-clothes of sinful deformity, but clad all over with the comely garments of light. The Gospel is not pregnant with a fancy, with a mere conceit of righteousness without us, hanging at distance over us; whilst our hearts within are nothing but cages of unclean birds, and like houses continually haunted with devils,

may, the very rendezvous of those fiends of darkness.

Holiness is the best thing that God himself can bestow upon us, either in this world or the world to come. True evangelical holiness, that is, Christ formed in the heart of believers, is the very cream and quintessence of the Gospel. And were our hearts sound within, were there not many thick and dark fumes that did arise from thence, and cloud our understandings, we could not easily conceive the substance of Heaven itself to be any thing else but holiness, freed from those encumbrances that did ever clog it and accloy it here : neither should we wish for any other heaven besides this.

CUDWORTH.

In reviewing the leading features of Christian morality, the *holiness* of its precepts is a circumstance that demands especial consideration, and is a proof that the religion, which inculcates it, came from God. All its precepts aim directly at the heart. It never goes about to form the *exterior* of man. To merely external duties it is a stranger. It forms the lives of men no otherwise than by forming their dispositions. It never addresses itself to their vanity, selfishness, or any other corrupt propensity. On the contrary, it declares open war and irreconcilable enmity against *every* evil disposition in the human heart. It tolerates none. Of the most odious sins, such as disobedience to parents, dishonesty, injustice, and murder, it speaks with abhorrence. It says that they ought not even to be named among Christians. But this is not all. It descends into the heart : it puts forth its hand and plucks out every root of bitterness, which, springing up, would pollute the soul and defile the life. Many principles which the world approves, and on many occasions considers to be harmless—as ambition, the eager pursuit of wealth, fondness for pleasure, pride, envy, revenge, contempt of others, and a disposition to filthy jesting,—the Gospel condemns in every form and degree. It forbids the indulgence of them even in thought ; it prohibits the adultery of the eye, and the murder of the heart ; and commands the desire to be strangled in its birth. Neither the hands, the tongue, the head, nor the heart, must be guilty of one iniquity. However the world may applaud the heroic ambition of one, the love of

glory in another, the successful pursuits of affluence in a third, the high-minded pride, the glowing patriotism which would compel all the neighbouring nations to bow the neck, the steady pursuit of revenge for injuries received, and a sovereign contempt of the rude and ignoble vulgar,—Christianity condemns them all, and enjoins the disciples of Jesus to crucify them without delay. Not one is to be spared, though dear as a right eye for use or pleasure, or even necessary as a right hand for defence or labour. The Gospel does not press men to consider what their fellow-men may think of them, or how it will affect their temporal interest ; but what is right, and what is necessary to their well-being. ‘ If you comply with its precepts you must *be*, and not merely *seem* to *be*. It is the heart that is required ; and all the different prescribed forms of worship and obedience are but so many varied expressions or modifications of it.’ *

Now, is any thing like this to be found in the writings of the opposers of revelation ? No. Their morality, we have seen, has no standard ; and their code of morals is, in fact, subversive of all morality. Their deity seems to take no cognisance of the heart. According to them ‘ there is no merit or crime in the intention.’ Their morality only goes to form the exterior of the man. It allows the utmost scope for wicked desires, provided they be not carried into execution to the injury of society : and according to their code, (as recently promulgated,) the assassination of a person who for some political reason may become obnoxious, is a laudable act ; the prohibition of the unlawful intercourse between the sexes is a perversion of the ‘ plainest dictates of nature ;’ and decayed old age is not worth the pains and expense bestowed in supporting it !

REV. T. H. HORNE.

The vital power of Religion.

WHILE I lay in darkness and the night of paganism, and when I fluctuated uncertain and dubious with wandering steps in the sea of a tempestuous age, ignorant of my own life, and alienated from light and truth, it appeared to me a harsh and difficult thing, as my manners then were, to obtain what divine grace had promised,—namely, that a man should be *born*

* Bogue's Essay, 74. Fuller's Gospel its own Witness, 27.

again, and that, being animated to a new life, he should strip himself of what he was before, and though the body remained the same, he should, in his mind, become altogether a new creature. How can so great a change be possible, said I,—that a man should suddenly, and at once, put off what nature and habit have confirmed in him? These evils are deeply and closely fixed in us. How shall he learn parsimony, who has been accustomed to expensive and magnificent feasts? And how shall he, who has been accustomed to purple, gold, and costly attire, condescend to the simplicity of a plebeian habit? Can he who was delighted with the honours of ambition, live private and obscure? Further,—the man has been accustomed to crowds of clients, and will think solitude the most dreadful punishment. He must still, thought I, be infested by tenacious allurements. Drunkenness, pride, anger, rapacity, cruelty, ambition, and lust, must still domineer over him.

These reflections engaged my mind very often, for they were peculiarly applicable to my own case. I was myself entangled in many errors of my former life, from which I did not think it possible to be cleared: hence, I favoured my vices, and, through despair of what was better, I stuck close to them, as part of my very frame and constitution. But after the filth of my former sins was washed away in the laver of regeneration, and divine light from above had infused itself into my heart, now purified and cleansed; after, through the effusion of the Holy Spirit from heaven, the new birth had made me a new creature indeed, immediately, and in an amazing manner, dubious things began to be cleared up; things once shut were opened; dark things shone forth; and what before seemed difficult, and even impossible, now appeared easy and practicable. I saw that what was born after the flesh, and had lived enslaved by wickedness, was of the *earth, earthy*; but that the new life, now animated by the Holy Ghost, began to be of God. You know and recollect, as perfectly as I do, my conversion from a deadly criminal state, to a state of lively virtue; you know what these opposite states have done for me—what they have taken away, and what they have conferred; and, therefore, I need not proclaim it. To boast of one's own merit is odious; though that cannot be called an expression of boasting,

but of gratitude, which ascribes nothing to the virtue of man, but professes that all proceeds from the gift of God. Thus, deliverance from sin is the consequence of sound faith. The preceding sinful state was owing to human blindness. Of God it is—of God, I say, even all that we can do: thence we live, thence we have strength, thence we conceive and assume vigour; even though, as yet, placed here below, we have some clear foretaste of our future felicity. Only, let fear be the guardian of innocence; that the Lord, who kindly shone into our minds, with an effusion of heavenly grace, may be detained as our guest by the steady obedience of the soul which delights in him, lest pardon received should beget a careless presumption, and the old enemy break in afresh.

CYPRIAN.

Religion consists much in the affections.

The Author of the human nature has not only given affections to men, but has made them very much the spring of men's actions. As the affections do not only necessarily belong to the human nature, but are a very great part of it; so (inasmuch as by regeneration, persons are renewed in the whole man, and sanctified throughout) holy affections do not only necessarily belong to true religion, but are a very great part of that. And as true religion is of a practical nature, and God hath so constituted the human nature, that the affections are very much the spring of men's actions, this also shews, that true religion must consist very much in the affections.

Such is man's nature, that he is very inactive, any otherwise than he is influenced by some affection, either love or hatred, desire, hope, fear, or some other. These affections we see to be the springs that set men a-going, in all the affairs of life, and engage them in all their pursuits: these are the things that put men forward, and carry them along in all their worldly business: and especially are men excited and animated by these, in all affairs, wherein they are earnestly engaged, and which they pursue with vigour. We see the world of mankind to be exceeding busy and active; and the affections of men are the springs of the motion: take away all love and hatred, all hope and fear, all anger, zeal, and affectionate desire, and the world would be, in a great measure,

motionless and dead; there would be no such thing as activity amongst mankind, or any earnest pursuit whatsoever. It is affection that engages the covetous man, and him that is greedy of worldly profits, in his pursuits; and it is by the affections, that the ambitious man is put forward in his pursuit of worldly glory; and it is the affections also that actuate the voluptuous man, in his pursuit of pleasure and sensual delights: the world continues, from age to age, in a continual commotion and agitation, in a pursuit of these things; but take away all affection, and the spring of all this motion would be gone, and the motion itself would cease. And as in worldly things, worldly affections are very much the spring of men's motion and action; so in religious matters, the spring of their actions are very much religious affections: he that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion.

Nothing is more manifest in fact, than that the things of religion take hold of men's souls no further than they affect them. There are multitudes that often hear the word of God, and therein hear of those things that are infinitely great and important, and that most nearly concern them, and all that is heard seems to be wholly ineffectual upon them, and to make no alteration in their disposition or behaviour; and the reason is, they are not affected with what they hear. There are many that often hear of the glorious perfections of God, his almighty power, and boundless wisdom, his infinite majesty, and that holiness of God by which he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity, and the heavens are not pure in his sight, and of God's infinite goodness and mercy, and hear of the great works of God's wisdom, power, and goodness, wherein there appear the admirable manifestations of these perfections; they hear particularly of the unspeakable love of God and Christ, and of the great things that Christ has done and suffered, and of the great things of another world, of eternal misery, in bearing the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, and of endless blessedness and glory in the presence of God, and the enjoyment of his dear love; they also hear the peremptory commands of God, and his gracious counsels and warnings, and the sweet invita-

tions of the Gospel; I say, they often hear these things, and yet remain as they were before, with no sensible alteration on them, either in heart or practice, because they are not affected with what they hear; and ever will be so till they are affected. I am bold to assert, that there never was any considerable change wrought in the mind or conversation of any one person, by any thing of a religious nature, that ever he read, heard, or saw, that had not his affections moved. Never was a natural man engaged earnestly to seek his salvation; never were any such brought to cry after wisdom, and lift up their voice for understanding, and to wrestle with God in prayer for mercy; and never was one humbled, and brought to the foot of God, from any thing that ever he heard or imagined of his own unworthiness and deservings of God's displeasure; nor was ever one induced to fly for refuge unto Christ, while his heart remained unaffected. Nor was there ever a saint awakened out of a cold, lifeless frame, or recovered from a declining state in religion, and brought back from a lamentable departure from God, without having his heart affected. And, in a word, there never was any thing considerable brought to pass in the heart or life of any man living, by the things of religion, that had not his heart deeply affected by those things.

The holy Scriptures do every where place religion very much in the affections; such as fear, hope, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, gratitude, compassion and zeal.

1. The Scriptures place much of religion in godly *fear*; insomuch that it is often spoken of as the character of those who are truly religious persons, that they tremble at God's word, that they fear before him, that their flesh trembles for fear of him, and that they are afraid of his judgments, that his excellency makes them afraid and his dread falls upon them, and the like: and a compellation commonly given the saints in Scripture, is, *fearers of God, or they that fear the Lord*. And because the fear of God is a great part of true godliness, hence true godliness, in general, is very commonly called by the name of *the fear of God*; as every one knows, that knows any thing of the Bible.

2. So *hope* in God and in the promises of his word, is often spoken of in the Scriptures, as a very considerable part of true religion. It is mentioned as one of

the three great things of which religion consists, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Hope in the Lord is also frequently mentioned as the character of the saints. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God*, Ps. cxlvi. 5. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is*, Jer. xvii. 7. *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord*. Ps. xxxi. 24. And the like in many other places. Religious fear and hope are, once and again, joined together, as jointly constituting the character of the true saints, Ps. xxxiii. 18. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy*. Ps. cxlvii. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy*. Hope is so great a part of true religion, that the Apostle says, *we are saved by hope*, Rom. viii. 24. And this is spoken of as the helmet of the Christian soldier; *And for an helmet, the hope of salvation*, 1 Thess. v. 8; and the sure and stedfast anchor of the soul, which preserves it from being cast away by the storms of this evil world; *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil*, Heb. vi. 19. It is spoken of as a great fruit and benefit which true saints receive by Christ's resurrection; *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*, 1 Pet. i. 3.

3. The Scriptures place religion very much in the affection of *love*, in love to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and love to the people of God, and to mankind. The texts, in which this is manifest, both in the Old Testament and the New, are innumerable. But of this more afterwards.

4. The contrary affection of *hatred* also, as having sin for its object, is spoken of in Scripture as no inconsiderable part of true religion. It is spoken of as that by which true religion may be known and distinguished; *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil*, Prov. viii. 13. And accordingly, the saints are called upon to give evidence of their sincerity by this; *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil*, Ps. xcvi. 10. And the Psalmist often mentions it as an evidence of his sincerity; *I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the*

work of them that turn aside, Ps. ci. 2, 3. *I hate every false way*, Ps. cxix. 104. So ver. 128. Again, Ps. cxxxix. 21, *Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?*

5. So holy *desire*, exercised in longings, hungerings, and thirstings after God and holiness, is often mentioned in Scripture as an important part of true religion. *The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee*, Isa. xxvi. 8. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple*, Ps. xxvii. 4. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?* Ps. xlii. 1, 2. *My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary*, Ps. lxiii. 1, 2. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God*, Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2. *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times*, Ps. cxix. 20. So Ps. lxxiii. 25. cxliii. 6, 7. cxxx. 6. Cant. iii. 1, 2. vi. 8. Such a holy desire and thirst of soul is mentioned, as one of those great things which renders or denotes a man truly blessed, in the beginning of Christ's sermon on the mount, *Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled*, Matt. v. 5. And this holy thirst is spoken of, as a great thing in the condition of a participation of the blessings of eternal life. *I will give to him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely*, Rev. xxi. 6.

6. The Scriptures speak of holy *joy*, as a great part of true religion; so it is represented in 1 Pet. i. 8. And as an important part of religion, it is often exhorted to, and pressed with great earnestness. *Delight thyself in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart*, Ps. cxvii. 4. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous*, Ps. xcvi. 12. So Ps. xxxiii. 1, *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous*. Matt. v. 12, *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad*. Phil. iii. 1, *Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord*. And chap. iv. 4, *Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice*.

1 Thess. v. 16, *Rejoice evermore. Ps. cxlix. 2, Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.* This is mentioned among the principal fruits of the Spirit of grace, Gal. v. 22, *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, &c.* The Psalmist mentions his holy joy as an evidence of his sincerity, cxix. 14, *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.*

7. Religious sorrow, mourning, and brokenness of heart, are also frequently spoken of as a great part of true religion. These things are often mentioned as distinguishing qualities of the true saints, and a great part of their character; *Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted*, Matt. v. 4. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit*, Ps. xxxiv. 18. *The Lord hath anointed me—to bind up the broken-hearted,—to comfort all that mourn*, Isa. lxi. 1, 2. This godly sorrow and brokenness of heart is often spoken of, not only as a great thing in the distinguishing character of the saints, but that in them, which is peculiarly acceptable and pleasing to God; *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*, Ps. li. 17. *Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones*, Isa. lvii. 15. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit*, Isa. lxvi. 2.

8. Another affection often mentioned, as that in the exercise of which much of true religion appears, is *gratitude*; especially as exercised in thankfulness and praise to God. This being so much spoken of in the Book of Psalms, and other parts of the holy Scriptures, I need not mention particular texts.

9. Again, the holy Scriptures do frequently speak of *compassion* or *mercy*, as a very great and essential thing in true religion: insomuch that good men are in Scripture denominated from hence; and a merciful man, and a good man, are equivalent terms in Scripture; *The righteous man perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away*, Isa. lvii. 1. And the Scripture chooses out this quality, as that by which, in a pe-

culiar manner, a righteous man is deciphered. Ps. xxxvii. 21, *The righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth; and verse 26, He is ever merciful and lendeth.* And Prov. xiv. 31, *He that honoureth the Lord, hath mercy on the poor.* And Col. iii. 12, *Put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, &c.* This is one of those great things, by which those who are truly blessed are described by our Saviour, Matt. v. 7. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* And this Christ also speaks of, as one of the weightier matters of the law, Matt. xxiii. 23. *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.* To the same purpose is that, Mic. vi. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.* And also that, Hos. vi. 6. *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice.* Which seems to have been a text much delighted in by our Saviour, by his manner of citing it once and again, Matt. ix. 13. and xii. 7.

10. Zeal is also spoken of, as a very essential part of the religion of true saints. It is spoken of as a great thing Christ had in view, in giving himself for our redemption, Tit. iii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* And this is spoken of, as the great thing wanting in the lukewarm Laodiceans, Rev. iii. 15, 16, 19.

I have mentioned but a few texts, out of an innumerable multitude, all over the Scripture, which place religion very much in the affections. But what has been observed, may be sufficient to shew that they who would deny that much of true religion lies in the affections, and maintain the contrary, must throw away what we have been wont to own for our Bible, and get some other rule, by which to judge of the nature of religion.

PRES. EDWARDS.

And, now, if the use of the affections in religion, in general, be at length shewn to be conformable to reason, it will not require many words to prove that our blessed Saviour is the proper object of them. We know that love, gratitude, joy, hope, trust, have all their appropriate objects. Now,

it must be at once conceded, that if these appropriate objects be not exhibited, it is perfectly unreasonable to expect that the correspondent passions should be excited. If we ask for love, in the case of an object which has no excellence, or desirableness; for gratitude, where no obligation has been conferred; for joy, where there is no just cause of self-congratulation; for hope, where nothing is expected; for trust, where there exists no ground of reliance; then, indeed, we must kiss the rod, and patiently submit to correction. This would be indeed Egyptian bondage, to demand the effects without the means of producing them. Is the case then so? Are we ready to adopt the language of the avowed enemies of our adorable Saviour; and again to say of him *in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, that he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him?* Isaiah, liii. 2. Is it no obligation that he who *thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, should yet for our sakes *make himself of no reputation, and take upon him the form of a servant, and be made in the likeness of men; and humble himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?* Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. Is it no cause of joy, *that to us is born a Saviour*, (Luke ii. 10, 11) by whom we may *be delivered from the power of darkness, and be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?* Col. i. 12, 13. Can there be a *hope comparable to that of our calling*, (Ephes. i. 18) *which is Christ in us, the hope of glory?* Col. i. 27. Can there be a trust to be preferred to the reliance on *Christ Jesus, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever?* Heb. xiii. 8. Surely, if our opponent be not dead to every generous emotion, he cannot look his own objection in the face, without a blush of shame and indignation.

WILBERFORCE.

Religion of a progressive nature.

RELIGION is a generous and noble thing in regard of its progress; it is perpetually carrying on that mind, in which it is once seated, toward perfection. Though the first appearance of it upon the souls of good men, may be but as the wings of the morning spreading themselves upon the mountains, yet it is still rising higher and higher upon them, chasing away all the filthy mists and vapours of sin and wick-

edness before it, till it arrives at its meridian altitude.* There is the strength and force of the Divinity in it; and though, when it first enters into the minds of men, it may seem to be *sown in weakness*, yet it will raise itself in power. As Christ was in his bodily appearance, he was still increasing in wisdom, and knowledge, and favour with God and man, until he was perfected in glory: so is he also in his spiritual appearance in the souls of men; and accordingly the New Testament does more than once distinguish of Christ in his several ages, and degrees of growth in the souls of all true Christians. Good men are always *walking on from strength to strength, till at last they see God in Zion*. Religion, though it hath its infancy, yet it hath no old age: while it is in its minority, it is always *in motu*; but when it comes to its maturity and full age, it will always be *in quiete*, it is then *always the same, and its years fail not, but it shall endure for ever*. Holy and religious souls being once touched with an inward sense of divine beauty and goodness, by a strong impress upon them are moved swiftly after God, and, as the Apostle expresses himself, *forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, they press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*; that so they may *attain to the resurrection of the dead*, Phil. iii. 11, 13, 14.

Where a spirit of religion is, there is the central force of heaven itself, quickening and enlivening those that are informed by it in their motions toward heaven. As on the other side all unhallowed and defiled minds are within the attractive power of hell, and are continually hastening their course thither, being strongly pressed down by the weight of their wickedness. 'Αἰ τινάς ἔχει κινήσεις ἢ φύσις, as Plutarch hath well observed, 'Every nature in this world hath some proper centre which it is always hastening to.' Sin and wickedness does not hover a little over the bottomless pit of hell, and only flutter about it; but it is continually sinking lower and lower into it. Neither does true grace make some feeble assays toward heaven, but by a mighty energy within itself, it is always soaring up higher and higher into heaven.

* *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*, Prov. iv. 18.

A good Christian does not only court his happiness, and cast now and then a smile upon it, or satisfy himself merely to be contracted to it; but with the greatest ardours of love and desire he pursues the solemnity of the just nuptials, that he may be wedded to it and made one with it. It is not an airy speculation of heaven as a thing (though never so undoubtedly) to come, that can satisfy his hungry desires, but the real possession of it even in this life.* Such a happiness would be less in the esteem of good men, that were only good to be enjoyed at the end of this life when all other enjoyments fail him.

REV. J. SMITH.

These expressions (1 Pet. v. 10.) have in them that which is primarily to be sought after by every Christian, *perseverance* and *progress* in grace. These two are here interwoven! for there be two words importing the one, and two the other, and they are interchangeably placed. This is often urged on Christians as their duty, and accordingly ought they to apply themselves to it, and use their highest diligence in it; not to take the beginning of Christianity for the end of it, to think it enough if they are entered into the way of it, and to sit down upon the entry; but to walk on, to *go from strength to strength*, and, even through the greatest difficulties and discouragements, to pass forward with unmoved stability and fixedness of mind. They ought to be aiming at perfection. It is true, we shall still fall exceedingly short of it; but the more we study it, the nearer shall we come to it; the higher we aim, the higher shall we shoot, though we shoot not so high as we aim.

It is an excellent life, and it is the proper life of a Christian; to be daily outstripping himself, to be spiritually wiser, holier, more heavenly-minded to-day than yesterday, and to-morrow (if it be added to his life) than to-day; *Suavissima vita est indies sentire se fieri meliorem*; every day loving the world less, and Christ more, than on the former, and gaining every day some further victory over his secret corruptions; having his passions more subdued and mortified, his desires in all temporal things more cool and indifferent, and in spiritual things, more ardent; that

miserable lightness of spirit cured, and his heart rendered more solid and fixed upon God, aspiring to more near communion with Him, and labouring that particular graces may be made more lively and strong, by often exercising and stirring them up; faith more confirmed and stayed, love more inflamed, composed meekness producing more deep humility. Oh, this were a worthy ambition indeed! You would have your estates growing, and your credit growing; how much rather should you seek to have your graces growing, and not be content with any thing you have attained to!

But all our endeavours and diligence in this, will be vain, unless we look for our perfecting and establishing from that *right hand*, without which we can do nothing. Thither the Apostle moves his desires for his brethren, and so teaches them the same address for themselves: *The God of all grace make you perfect.* LEIGHTON.

Christianity directs men to aim at the *very highest attainments, whilst she encourages the weakest efforts*. Never did any religion but the Christian lay man so low in abasement and self-humiliation, and yet, at the same time, raise him to such a height of holy pursuit, and cheer him with such encouragements under his weakness and failures. Thus it unites every thing requisite in the moral machinery which is to operate upon man. It applies a mighty lever, so to speak, which lifts him up from the depths into which he has sunk, and places him on the elevated course where he is to run his race. It says to him, *Be ye holy, as God is holy*, Lev. xi. 44.—2 Pet. i. 15, 16: and then adds, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Matt. xi. 29, 30. It bids man aim at the standard of supreme love to Almighty God, and of love to his neighbour, for God's sake; and yet assures him that he will not *break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax*, Isa. xlii. 3. It never says to him, 'You have done enough, you have attained a sufficient measure of holiness;' and yet, it never says to him, 'Your faulty efforts are unacceptable, your imperfect beginnings are useless.' In short, it animates the advanced disciple to higher attainments, and condescends to the infant scholar in his incipient efforts: it never lowers its standard on the one hand, nor

* So we read John vi. 54. *hath eternal life*; and 1 John v. 11-13.

discourages the feeblest essays on the other; but unites the loftiest aim with the most genuine humility in the temper of its aspirants; and thus carries the clearest testimony within itself of a divinely inspired code. REV. D. WILSON.

Necessity of a thorough work of Conviction of Sin.

If a man be not thoroughly convinced of sin, and his heart truly broken, whatever his profession of godliness may be, yet he will be sure to miscarry. Every work of conviction is not a thorough work: there are convictions that are not only natural and rational, but not from the powerful work of the Spirit of God.

Rational conviction is 'that which proceeds from the working of a natural conscience, charging guilt from the light of nature, by the help of those *κοινὰ ἔννοια*, those common principles of reason that are in all men.' This is the conviction you read of, Rom. ii. 14, 15. It is said, that the Gentiles, who had not the law, yet had their consciences bearing witness, and accusing or excusing one another. Though they had not the light of Scripture, yet they had convictions from the light of nature. Now, by the help of the Gospel light, these convictions may be much improved, and yet the heart not renewed.

But then there is a spiritual conviction; and this is that work of the Spirit of God upon the sinner's heart by the word, whereby the guilt and filth of sin is fully discovered, and the woe and misery of a natural state distinctly set home upon the conscience, to the dread and terror of the sinner whilst he abides in that state and condition. And this is the conviction that is a sound and thorough work. . .

Labour then after a thorough work of conviction; every conviction will not do it: the almost Christian hath his convictions as well as the true Christian, or else he had never gone so far; but they are not sound and right convictions, or else he had gone farther: God will have the soul truly sensible of the bitterness of sin, before it shall taste the sweetness of mercy. The plough of conviction must go deep, and make deep furrows in the heart, before God will sow the precious seed of grace and comfort there, that so it may have depth of earth to grow in. This is the constant method of God; first to shew

man his sin, then his Saviour; first his danger, then his Redeemer; first his wound, then his cure; first his own vileness, then Christ's righteousness. We must be brought to cry out, *Unclean, unclean! to mourn for him whom we have pierced*, and then he sets open, for us, *a fountain to wash in for sin, and for uncleanness*. That is a notable place; *He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light*, Job xxxiii. 27. 28.; the sinner must see the unprofitableness of his unrighteousness, before he profit by Christ's righteousness. The Israelites are first stung with the fiery serpents, and then the brazen serpent is set up. Ephraim is first thoroughly convinced, and then God's bowels of mercy work toward him. Thus it was with Paul, Manasseh, the jailer, &c. So that this is the unchangeable method of God in working grace, to begin with conviction of sin.

Oh therefore labour for thorough conviction; and there are three things we should especially be convinced of.

First, 'Be convinced of the evil of sin;' the filthy and heinous nature of it: this is the greatest evil in the world; it wrongs God, it wounds Christ, it grieves the Holy Spirit, it ruineth a precious soul; all other evils are not to be named with this. My brethren, though to do sin is the worst work, yet to see sin is the best sight; for sin discovered in its vileness, makes Christ to be desired in his fulness.

But above all, labour to be convinced of the mischief of an unsound heart; what an abhorring it is to God, what certain ruin it brings upon the soul. Oh think often upon the hypocrite's hell; Matt. xiv. 15.

Secondly, 'Be convinced of the misery and desperate danger of a natural condition;' for till we see the plague of our hearts, and the misery of our state by nature, we shall never be brought of ourselves to seek help in another.

Thirdly, 'Be convinced of the utter insufficiency and inability of any thing below Christ Jesus to minister relief to thy soul in this case:' all things beside Jesus Christ are 'physicians of no value;' duties, performances, prayers, tears, self-righteousness, avail nothing in this case; they make us, like the troops of Tema, to return

'ashamed at our disappointment' from such 'failing brooks.'

Alas! it is an infinite righteousness that must satisfy for us, for it is an infinite God that is offended by us. If ever thy sin be pardoned, it is infinite mercy that must pardon it; if ever thou be reconciled to God, it is infinite merit must do it: if ever thy heart be changed, and thy state renewed, it is infinite power must effect it; and if ever thy soul escape hell, and be saved at last, it is infinite grace must save it.

In these three things right and sound conviction lieth; and wherever the Spirit of God worketh these thorough convictions, it is in order to a true and sound conversion; for by this means the soul is brought under a right qualification for the receiving of Christ.

MATT. MEAD.

Duty of an open Confession of our Faith.

IF there were no other argument, yet, seeing the object of faith is supposed infallibly true, and acknowledged to be so by every one that believeth, seeing it is the nature of truth not to hide itself, but rather to desire the light, that it may appear; this were sufficient to move us to a confession of our faith. But, besides the nature of the thing, we shall find many arguments obliging, pressing, urging us to such a profession. For, first, from the same God, and by the same means by which we have received the object of our faith, by which we came under a possibility of faith, we have also received an express command to make a confession of the same. *Be ready*, saith St. Peter, *always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you*, 1 Pet. iii. 15; and there can be no reason of hope but what is grounded on faith, nor can there be an answer given unto that, without an acknowledgment of this. Secondly, it is true, indeed, that the great promises of the Gospel are made unto faith, and glorious things are spoken of it, but the same promises are made to the confession of faith, together with it; and we know who it is hath said, *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven*, Matt. x. 32. Besides, the profession of the faith of one Christian confirmeth and edifieth another in his, and the mutual benefit of all layeth an obligation upon every particular. Again; the matters of faith contain so much pu-

rity of doctrine, persuade to such holiness of life, describe God so infinitely glorious, so transcendently gracious, so loving in himself, so merciful in his Son, so wonderful in all his works, that the sole confession of it glorifieth God; and how can we expect to enter into that glory which is none of ours, if we deny God that glory which is his? Lastly, the concealing of those truths which he hath revealed, the not acknowledging of that faith which we are thought to believe, is so far from giving God that glory which is due unto him, that it dishonoureth the faith which it refuseth or neglecteth to profess, and casteth a kind of contumely upon the author of it, as if God had revealed that which man should be ashamed to acknowledge. Wherefore, he that came to save us hath also said unto us, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels*, Luke ix. 26. Such a necessity there is of confession of faith, in respect of God, who commanded it, and is glorified in it; in respect of ourselves, who shall be rewarded for it; and in respect of our brethren, who are edified and confirmed by it.

BP. PEARSON.

It was a notable speech of Azariah the prophet, to Asa, *The Lord is with you, while ye be with him*, 2 Chron. xv. 2. If thou stand with the complete armour of God, pleading the cause of God, fighting against the enemy of God, then mayest thou say in a good conscience, God is with thee, and thou art with him: but, alas! we see in this generation many wearing Christ's livery, and bearing Satan's armour, professing friendship to Christ, yet fighting against him: these two factions are entered already into the battle, pell-mell, so that in the smallest fellowships some ye shall find advancing the kingdom of the one, though very few to fight for the glory of the other. What a shame is this for us, who say we are on the Lord's side, that a wicked man serving Satan shall, in our audience, open his mouth to blaspheme God, and we will not open our mouths to rebuke him? We see carnal men so shameless, that they stand upon no circumstances to dishonour God, and we who profess we love him, for fear we fail against courtesy, and I cannot tell what circumstances, dare not open our mouths to praise him.

Our coldness in this point hath need to be admonished, that we may be stirred up, not by profession only, but by conversation also, to make it known to the world that we belong wholly to the Lord Jesus.

BP. COWPER.

Necessity of searching the Heart and keeping it with all diligence.

It is the hardest of works to keep the heart. To shuffle over religious duties with a loose and heedless spirit, will cost no great pains, but to set thyself before the Lord, and tie up thy loose and vain thoughts to a constant and serious attendance upon him—this will cost thee something. To attain a facility and dexterity of language in prayer, and put thy meaning into apt and decent expressions, is easy; but to get thy heart broken for sin whilst thou art confessing it—melted with free grace whilst thou art blessing God for it—to be really ashamed and humbled through the apprehensions of God's infinite holiness, and to keep thy heart in this frame, not only in, but after duty, will surely cost thee some groans and travailling pains of soul: to repress the outward acts of sin, and compose the external part of thy life in a laudable and comely manner, is no great matter; even carnal persons, by the force of common principles, can do this; but to kill the root of corruption within, to set and keep up an holy government over thy thoughts, to have all things lie straight and orderly in the heart, this is not easy. . . .

It is a constant work. The keeping of the heart is such a work as is never done till life be done; this labour and our life end together. It is with a Christian in this business, as it is with seamen that have sprung a leak at sea—if they tug not constantly at the pump, the water increases upon them, and will quickly sink them. It is in vain for them to say the work is hard, and we are weary; there is no time or condition in the life of a Christian, which will suffer an intermission of this work. It is in the keeping watch over our hearts, as it was in the keeping up of Moses's hands, whilst Israel and Amalek were fighting below, Exod. xvii. 12. No sooner do Moses's hands grow heavy and sink down, but Amalek prevails. You know it cost David and Peter many a sad day and night for intermitting the watch over their own hearts but a few minutes.

It is the most important business of a Christian's life. Without this we are but formalists in religion; all our professions, gifts, and duties signify nothing—*My son give me thine heart*, Prov. xxiii. 36. God is pleased to call that a gift, which is indeed a debt; he will put this honour upon the creature, to receive it from him in the way of a gift; but if this be not given him, he regards not whatever else you bring to him. There is so much only of worth and value in what we do, as there is of heart in it. . . .

The improvement of our graces depends upon the keeping our hearts. I never knew grace thrive in a negligent and careless soul: the habits and roots of grace are planted in the heart; and the deeper they are radicated there, the more thriving and flourishing grace is. In Eph. iii. 17, we read of *being rooted in grace*: grace in the heart is the root of every gracious word in the mouth, and of every holy work in the hand, Psal. cxvi. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 13. It is true, Christ is the root of a Christian; but Christ is the originating root; and grace a root originated, planted, and influenced by Christ: according as this thrives under divine influences, so the acts of grace are more or less fruitful, or vigorous. Now in a heart not kept with care and diligence, these fructifying influences are stopped and cut off, multitudes of vanities break in upon it, and devour its strength: the heart is, as it were, the pasture in which multitudes of thoughts are fed every day; a gracious heart diligently kept, feeds many precious thoughts of God in a day—*How precious are thy thoughts to me, O God! how great is the sum of them? If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; and when I awake, I am still with thee*, Psal. cxxxix. 17. And as the gracious heart feeds and nourishes them, so they refresh and feast the heart. *My soul is filled as with marrow and fatness, whilst I think upon thee*, &c. Psal. lxxiii. 5, 6. But in the disregarded heart, swarms of vain and foolish thoughts are perpetually working, and jumble out those spiritual ideas, and thoughts of God, by which the soul should be refreshed.

Besides, the careless heart makes nothing out of any duty or ordinance it performs or attends on; and yet these are the conduits of heaven, from whence grace is watered and made fruitful. A man may

go with a heedless spirit from ordinance to ordinance, abide all his days under the choicest teaching, and yet never be improved by them; for the neglect of the heart is a leak in the bottom; no heavenly influences, how rich soever, abide in that soul. The heart that lies open and common, is like the highway, free for all passengers; *when the seed fell on it, the fowls came and devoured it*, Matt. xiii. 3, 4. Alas! it is not enough to hear, unless we take heed how we hear; a man may pray, and never be the better, unless he watch unto prayer. In a word, all ordinances, means, and duties, are blessed unto the improvement of grace, according to the care and strictness we use in keeping our hearts in them.

Lastly, The stability of our souls in the hour of temptation, will be much according to the care and conscience we have of keeping our hearts: the careless heart is an easy prey to Satan in the hour of temptation, his main batteries are raised against the heart: if he wins that, he wins all; for it commands the whole man: and, alas! how easy a conquest is a neglected heart? It is no more difficult to surprise it, than for an enemy to enter that city whose gates are opened and unguarded: it is the watchful heart that discovers and suppresses the temptation before it comes to its strength. Divines observe this to be the method in which temptations are ripened and brought to their full strength.

FLAVEL.

Necessity of living in a constant view of God.

How great is our offence and loss, that we live not in much more constant views of God. Herein we sin and suffer both at once; things both very unsuitable to Heaven. Mindfulness of God is the living spring of all holy and pleasant affections and deportments towards him; sets all the wheels a-going; makes the soul as the chariots of Aminadab. These wheels have their eyes also, are guided by a mind, by an intellectual principle. Knowing, intelligent beings (as we also are by participation and according to our measure) so act mutually towards one another. We cannot move towards God but with an open eye, seeing him and our way towards him. If we close our eyes we stand still, or blindly run another course, we know not

whither. All sin is darkness, whether it be neglect of good, or doing of evil: its way is a way of darkness; as a course of holy motion is walking in the light. Our shutting our eyes towards God creates that darkness; surrounds us with a darkness comprehensive of all sin. Now is every thing of enjoined duty waved, and any evil done, that sinful nature prompts us to. Well might it be said, *He that sinneth hath not seen God*, 1 John iii. 6. When we have made ourselves this darkness, we fall of course under Satan's empire, and are presently within his dominions. He is the prince of darkness, and can rule us now at his will. Perishing lost souls are such as in whom the God of this world hath blinded their minds. To open their eyes, and *turn them from darkness to light*, is, to turn them also *from the power of Satan unto God*. What a hell of wickedness are we brought into, in the twinkling of an eye! We are *without God in the world*; as, if a man wink, though at noon-day, he hath as it were put out the sun, it is with him as if there were no such thing. When we have banished God out of our sight, and forgotten him, it is with us as if there were no God. If such a state grow habitual to us, (as we know every sinful aversion of our eye from God tends thereto,) what wickedness is there that will not lurk in this darkness? How often in Scripture is *forgetting God* used as a character, yea, as a paraphrase, a full, though summary expression of sin in general; as if the wickedness, the malignity, the very hell itself of sin, were wholly included (and not connoted only) here. *Now consider this*, (after so dreadful an enumeration, so black a catalogue) *all that forget God*, Ps. l. 22. And again, *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God*, Ps. ix. 17. That heap, that mass of wickedness, of pride, of persecution, cursing, blasphemy, deceit, and mischief, all meet in one that hath not God in all his thoughts. REV. J. HOWE.

Necessity of counting the cost of embracing Christianity.

ALL that will follow Christ, must take up their cross. This is a very harsh and unpleasing article of the Gospel to a carnal mind, but the Scriptures conceal it not. Men are not led blindfold into sufferings, and drawn into a hidden snare by

the Gospel's invitations ; they are told it very often, that they may not pretend a surprisal, nor have any just plea for starting back again. So our Saviour tells his disciples, why he was so express and plain with them in this, *These things have I told you that ye be not offended*, John xvi. 1 ; as if he had said, I have shewed you the ruggedness of your way, that you may not stumble at it, taking it to be a smooth plain one. But then, where this is spoken of, it is usually allayed with the mention of those comforts that accompany these sufferings, or of that glory which follows them. The doctrine of the Apostles, which was so verified in their own persons, was this, that *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*, Acts xiv. 22. An unpleasant way indeed, if you look no further ; but a *kingdom* at the end of it, and that *the kingdom of God*, will transfuse pleasure into the most painful step in it all. It seems a sad condition that falls to the share of godly men in this world, to be eminent in sorrows and troubles. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous*, Ps. xxxiv. 19 ; but that which follows, weighs them abundantly down in consolation, that the Lord himself is engaged in their afflictions, both for their deliverance out of them in due time, and, in the mean time, for their support and preservation under them : *the Lord delivers them out of them all*, and, till he does that, *he keepeth all their bones*. This was literally verified in the natural body of Christ, as St. John observes, xix. 36 ; and it holds spiritually true in his mystical body. The Lord supports the spirits of believers in their troubles, with such solid consolations as are the pillars and strength of their souls, as the bones are of the body, which the Hebrew word for them imports. So, *He keepeth all his bones* ; and the desperate condition of wicked men is opposed to this, verse 21, to illustrate it, *Evil shall slay the wicked*.

Thus, John xvi. 33, they are forewarned in the close, what to expect at the world's hands, as they were divers times before in that same sermon ; but it is a sweet testament, take it altogether : *Ye shall have tribulation in the world, but peace in me*. And seeing he hath jointly bequeathed these two to his followers, were it not great folly to renounce such a bargain, and to let go that peace for fear of this trouble ? The trouble is but *in the world*, but the

peace is in him, who weighs down thousands of worlds.

So then, they do exceedingly mistake and misreckon, who would reconcile Christ and the world, who would have the church of Christ, or, at least, themselves for their own shares, enjoy both kinds of peace together ; would willingly have peace in Christ, but are very loth to part with the world's peace. They would be Christians, but they are very ill satisfied when they hear of any thing but ease and prosperity in that estate, and willingly forget the tenor of the Gospel in this ; and so, when times of trouble and sufferings come, their minds are as new and uncouth to it, as if they had not been told of it beforehand. They like better St. Peter's carnal advice to Christ, to avoid suffering, Matt. xvi. 22, than his Apostolic doctrine to Christians, teaching them, that as Christ *suffered*, so they likewise *are called to suffering*. Men are ready to think as Peter did, that Christ should favour himself more in his own body, his church, than to expose it to so much suffering ; and most would be of Rome's mind in this, at least in affection, that the badge of the church should be pomp and prosperity, and not the cross : the true cross and afflictions are too heavy and painful.

But *God's thoughts are not as ours* : those whom he calls to a kingdom, he calls to sufferings as the way to it. He will have the heirs of heaven know, that they are not at home on earth, and that *this is not their rest*. He will not have them, with the abused world, fancy a happiness here, and, as St. Augustine says, ' seek a happy life in the region of death.' The reproaches and wrongs that encounter them shall elevate their minds often to that land of peace and rest, *where righteousness dwells*, 2 Pet. iii. 13. The hard taskmasters shall make them weary of Egypt, which otherwise, possibly, they would comply too well with ; shall dispose them for deliverance, and make it welcome, which, it may be, they might but coldly desire, if they were better used.

He knows what he does, who secretly serves his own good purposes by men's evil ones, and, by the *ploughers that make long furrows* on the back of his church, Ps. cxxix. 3, makes it a fruitful field to himself. Therefore, it is great folly and unadvisedness, to take up a prejudice against his way, to think it might be better

as we would model it, and to complain of the order of things, whereas we should complain of disordered minds : but we had rather have all altered and changed for us, the very course of Providence, than seek the change of our own perverse hearts. But the right temper of a Christian is, to run always cross to the corrupt stream of the world and human iniquity, and to be willingly carried along with the stream of Divine Providence, and not at all to stir a hand, no, nor a thought, to row against that mighty current ; and not only is he carried with it upon necessity, because there is no steering against it, but cheerfully and voluntarily ; not because he must, but because he would. LEIGHTON.

We must not think to be carried up to heaven with the breath of popular applause, nor to swim through a deluge of carnal pleasures into the haven of everlasting happiness. No ; we must look to be tossed to and fro in this world, as in a raging and tempestuous ocean, and never look for perpetual calmness and tranquillity until we are got above the clouds, yea, even above the sun and stars themselves. This world was always a world of trouble, and ever will be. Its very friends, and they that have their portion here, can find no quiet nor satisfaction in it : but the disciples of Christ *they are not of this world*, as Christ himself tells us ; and therefore no wonder if the world frowns more upon them than on others. The way they walk in is opposite to the world : it is enmity itself to the flesh ; and therefore no wonder if they meet with so much enmity and opposition here. The way wherein they go after Christ is a cross-way ; it is cross to sin, cross to Satan, cross to the world, cross to our very selves as we are by nature, and, by consequence, cross to all men in the world but Christ's disciples ; and therefore it is no wonder they meet with so many crosses in it. But howsoever, if we desire to go after Christ, he hath told us beforehand what we must expect. As he hath borne the cross before us, he expects that we now bear it after him ; yea we must not only bear it, but take it up too—not that we should run ourselves into danger, but that we should balk no duty to avoid it, so as to be willing and ready to undergo the greatest suffering rather than to commit the least sin, and to run the greatest

danger rather than neglect the smallest duty. If whilst we are walking in the narrow path of holiness there happens to lie a cross in the way, we must not go on one side nor on the other side of it out of the path we walk in, neither must we kick and spurn at it, but we must patiently take it up and carry it along with us. If it be a little heavy at first, it will soon grow lighter, and not at all hinder, but rather further our progress towards heaven. BP. BEVERIDGE.

Necessity of diligence and zeal in our Christian calling.

THE work of a Christian here is very great and various. The soul must be renewed ; corruptions must be mortified ; custom, temptations, and worldly interests must be conquered ; flesh must be subdued ; life, friends, and credit must be slighted ; conscience on good grounds be quieted ; and assurance of pardon and salvation attained. Though God must give us these without our merit, yet he will not give them without our earnest seeking and labour. Besides, there is much knowledge to be got, many ordinances to be used, and duties to be performed : every age, year, and day ; every place we come to ; every person we deal with ; every change of our condition ; still require the renewing of our labour : wives, children, neighbours, friends, enemies, all of them call for duty from us. Judge then, whether men that have so much business lying upon their hands, should not exert themselves ; and whether it be their wisdom either to delay or loiter.—Time passeth on. Yet a few days, and we shall be here no more. Many diseases are ready to assault us. We that are now preaching, and hearing, and talking and walking, must very shortly be carried, and laid in the dust, and there left to the worms in darkness and corruption ; we are almost there already ; we know not whether we shall have another sermon, or sabbath, or hour. How active should they be who know they have so short a space for so great a work ?—And we have enemies that are always plotting and labouring for our destruction. How diligent is Satan in all kind of temptations ! Therefore *be sober, be vigilant, ; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may de-*

your. Whom resist stedfast in the faith, 1 Pet. v. 8, 9. *How diligent are all the ministers of Satan! False teachers, scoffers, persecutors, and our inbred corruptions, the most busy and diligent of all! Will a feeble resistance serve our turn? Should we not be more active for our preservation, than our enemies are for our ruin? . . .*

The sovereign wisdom of God has made striving necessary to salvation. Who knows the way to heaven better than the God of heaven? When men tell us we are too strict, whom do they accuse, God or us? If it were a fault, it would lie in him that commands, and not in us who obey. These are the men that ask us, whether we are wiser than all the world besides? and yet they will pretend to be wiser than God. How can they reconcile their language with the laws of God? *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force,* Mat. xi. 12. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able,* Luke xiii. 24. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest,* Eccles. ix. 10. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,* Phil. ii. 12. *Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,* 2 Pet. i. 10. *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* 1 Pet. iv. 18. Let them bring all the seeming reasons they can, against the holy violence of the saints; this sufficeth me to confute them all, that God is of another mind, and he hath commanded me to do much more than I do; and though I could see no other reason for it, his will is reason enough. Who should make law for us, but he that made us? And who should point out the way to heaven, but he that must bring us thither? And who should fix the terms of salvation, but he that bestows the gift of salvation? So that let the world, the flesh, or the devil, speak against a holy laborious life, this is my answer, God hath commanded it. Nay, there never was, or will be, a man, but will approve such a life, and will one day justify the diligence of the saints. And who would not go that way, which every man shall finally applaud? True, it is now a *way every where spoken against*. But let me tell you, most that speak

against it, in their judgments approve of it; and those that are now against it, will shortly be of another mind. If they come to heaven, their mind must be changed before they come there. . . . Even the best of Christians, when they come to die, exceedingly lament their negligence. They then wish, 'Oh that I had been a thousand times more holy, more heavenly, more laborious for my soul! The world accuses me for doing too much, but my own conscience accuses me of doing too little. It is far easier bearing the scoffs of the world, than the lashes of conscience. I had rather be reproached by the devil for seeking salvation, than reprov'd of God for neglecting it.' How do their failings thus wound and disquiet them, who have been the wonders of the world for their heavenly conversation?—Is not for want of more diligence, that heaven itself is often lost? When they that have *heard the Word, and anon with joy received it, and have done many things, and heard the ministers of Christ gladly,* (Matt. xiii. 20; Mark vi. 20) shall yet perish; should not this rouse us out of our security? How far hath many a man followed Christ, and yet forsook him, when all worldly interests and hopes were to be renounced?—God hath resolved, that heaven shall not be had on easier terms. Rest must always follow labour. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,* Heb. xii. 14.

BAXTER.

Necessity of personal Holiness.

GRACE is Holiness militant, holiness encumbered with many enemies and difficulties, which it still fights against, and manfully quits itself of; and glory is nothing else but Holiness triumphant, Holiness with a palm of victory in her hand, and a crown upon her head: 'Deus ipse cum omni sua bonitate, quatenus extra me est, non facit me beatum, sed quatenus in me est:—' God himself cannot make me happy, if he be only without me, and unless he give in a participation of himself and his own likeness into my soul.' Happiness is nothing but the releasing and unfettering of our souls from all these narrow, scant, and particular good things; and the espousing of them to the highest and most universal good, which is not this or that particular good, but goodness itself; and this is the same thing that we call Holiness. Which, because we our-

selves are so little acquainted with, (being for the most part ever courting a mere shadow of it,) therefore we have such low, abject, and beggarly conceits thereof: whereas it is in itself the most noble, heroic and generous thing in the world. For I mean by Holiness nothing else but God stamped and printed upon the soul. And we may please ourselves with what conceits we will; but so long as we are void of this, we do but dream of Heaven, and I know not what fond paradise; we do but blow up and down an airy bubble of our own fancies, which riseth out of the froth of our vain hearts; we do but court a painted heaven, and woo happiness in a picture, whilst in the mean time a true and real hell will suck in our souls into it, and soon make us sensible of a solid woe and substantial misery.

Divine wisdom hath so ordered the frame of the whole universe, as that every thing should have a certain proper place, that should be a receptacle for it. Hell is the sink of all sin and wickedness. The strong magic of nature pulls and draws every thing continually to that place which is suitable to it, and to which it doth belong; so all these heavy bodies press downwards towards the centre of our earth, being drawn in by it: in like manner hell, wheresoever it is, will by strong sympathy pull in all sin, and magnetically draw it to itself: as true holiness is always breathing upwards, and fluttering towards Heaven, striving to embosom itself with God; and it will at last undoubtedly be conjoined with him; no dismal shades of darkness can possibly stop it in its course or bear it back.

Ὡς αἰεὶ τὸ ὁμοιον ἀγεί Θεὸς εἰς τὸ ὁμοιον.

Nay, we do but deceive ourselves with names: Hell is nothing but the orb of sin and wickedness, or else that hemisphere of darkness in which all evil moves: and Heaven is the opposite hemisphere of light; or else, if you please, the bright orb of truth, holiness, and goodness: and we do actually in this life instate ourselves in the possession of one or other of them. Take sin and disobedience out of hell, and it will presently clear up into light, tranquillity, serenity, and shine out into a heaven. Every true saint carrieth his heaven about with him in his own heart; and hell, that is without him, can have no power over him. He might safely wade

through hell itself, and, like the *three children*, pass through the midst of that *fiery furnace*, and yet not at all be scorched with the flames of it: he might walk through the *valley of the shadow of death*, and yet *fear no evil*.

Sin is the only thing in the world that is contrary to God. God is light, and that is darkness: God is beauty, and that is ugliness and deformity. All sin is direct rebellion against God; and with what notions soever we sugar it and sweeten it, yet God can never smile upon it; he will never make a truce with it. God declares open war against sin, and bids defiance to it; for it is a professed enemy to God's own life and being. God, which is infinite goodness, cannot but hate sin, which is purely evil. And though sin be in itself but a poor, impotent and crazy thing, nothing but straitness, poverty and non-entity, so that of itself it is the most wretched and miserable thing in the world, and needeth no farther punishment besides itself; yet divine vengeance beats it off still farther and farther from God, and, wheresoever it is, will be sure to scourge it and lash it continually. God and sin can never agree together.

That I may therefore yet come nearer to ourselves: *This is the message that I have now to declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.* Christ and the Gospel are light, and there is no darkness at all in them: if you say that you know Christ and his Gospel, and yet keep not Christ's commandments, but dearly hug your private darling corruptions, *you are liars, and the truth is not in you*; you have no acquaintance with the God of light, nor the Gospel of light. If any of you say that you know Christ, and have an interest in him, and yet (as I fear too many do) still nourish ambition, pride, vain-glory within your breasts, harbour malice, revengefulness and cruel hatred to your neighbours in your hearts, eagerly scramble after this worldly pelf, and make the strength of your parts and endeavours serve that blind mammon, the god of this world; if you wallow and tumble in the filthy puddle of fleshly pleasures, or if you aim only at yourselves in your lives, and make yourself the compass by which you sail, and the star by which you steer your course, look-

ing at nothing higher or more noble than yourselves; deceive not yourselves, *you have neither seen Christ nor known him*: you are deeply incorporated (if I may so speak) with the *spirit of this world*, and have no true sympathy with God and Christ, no fellowship at all with them.

And, I beseech you, let us consider; Be there not many of us, that pretend much to Christ, that are plainly in our lives as proud, ambitious, vainglorious, as any others? Be there not many of us that are as much under the power of unruly passions, as cruel, revengeable, malicious, censorious, as others? that have our minds as deeply engaged in the world, and as much envassalled to riches, gain, profit, those great admired deities of the sons of men, and their souls as much overwhelmed and sunk with the cares of this life? Do not many of us as much give ourselves to the pleasures of the flesh, and though not without regrets of conscience, yet every now and then secretly soak ourselves in them? Be there not many of us that have as deep a share likewise in injustice and oppression, in *vexing the fatherless and the widows*? I wish it may not prove some of our cases at that last day, to use such pleas as these unto Christ in our behalf; *Lord, I have prophesied in thy name*; I have preached many a zealous sermon for thee; I have kept many a long fast; I have been very active for thy cause in church, in state; nay, I never made any question but that my name was written in thy book of life: when yet, alas! we shall receive no other return from Christ but this: *I know you not: depart from me ye workers of iniquity*. I am sure there be too many of us that have long pretended to Christ, which make little or no progress in true Christianity, that is, holiness of life; that ever hang hovering in a twilight of grace, and never seriously put ourselves forward into clear daylight, but esteem that glimmering *crepusculum* which we are in, and like that faint twilight better than broad open day: whereas, *the path of the just* (as the wise man speaks) *is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*. I am sure there be many of us that are perpetual dwarfs in our spiritual stature, like those *silly women* (that St. Paul speaks of) *laden with sins and led away with divers lusts*, that are *ever learning, and never able to come to the*

knowledge of the truth; that are not now one jot taller in Christianity than we were many years ago, but have still as sickly, crazy, and unsound a temper of soul as we had long before.

Indeed we seem to do something; we are always moving and lifting at the stone of corruption that lies upon our hearts; but yet we never stir it notwithstanding, or at least never roll it off from us. We are sometimes a little troubled with the guilt of our sins, and then we think we must thrust our lusts out of our hearts; but afterwards we sprinkle ourselves over with I know not what holy water, and so are contented to let them still abide quietly within us. We do every day truly confess the same sins, and pray against them; and yet still commit them as much as ever, and lie as deeply under the power of them. We have the same water to pump out in every prayer, and still we let the same leak in again upon us. We make a great deal of noise, and raise a great deal of dust with our feet; but we do not move from off the ground on which we stood; we do not go forward at all: or if we do sometimes make a little progress, we quickly lose again the ground which we had gained; like those upper planets in the heaven, which (as the astronomers tell us) sometimes move forwards, sometimes quite backwards, and sometimes perfectly stand still; have their stations and retrogradations, as well as their direct motion. As if religion were nothing else but a dancing up and down upon the same piece of ground, and making several motions and friskings on it; and not a sober journeying and travelling onwards toward some certain place. We do and undo; we do Penelope's *telam texere*; we weave sometimes a web of holiness, but then we let our lusts come, and undo and unravel all again. Like Sisyphus in the fable, we roll up a mighty stone with much ado, sweating and tugging up the hill; and then we let it go, and tumble down again unto the bottom: and this is our constant work. Like those Danaides which the poets speak of, we are always filling water into a sieve by our prayers, duties, and performances, which still runs out as fast as we pour it in.

What is it that thus cheats us and gulls us of our religion? that makes us thus constantly to tread the same ring and circle of duties, where we make no progress at

all forwards, and the farther we go, are still never the nearer to our journey's end? What is it that thus starves our religion, and makes it look like those *kine* in Pharaoh's dream, *ill-favoured, and lean-fleshed*, that it hath no colour in its face, no blood in its veins, no life nor heat at all in its members? What is it that doth thus bedwarf us in our Christianity? What low, sordid, unworthy principles do we act by, that thus hinder our growth, and make us stand at a stay, and keep us always at the very porch and entrance where we first began? Is it a sleepy, sluggish conceit, that it is enough for us if we be but once in a state of grace, if we have but once stepped over the threshold, we need not take so great pains to travel any farther? Or is it another damping, choking, stifling opinion, that Christ hath done all for us already without us, and nothing need more to be done within us? No matter how wicked we be in ourselves, for we have holiness without us; no matter how sickly and diseased our souls be within, for they have health without them. Why may we not as well be satisfied and contented to have happiness without us too, to all eternity, and so ourselves for ever continue miserable? *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: but he that committeth sin is of the devil.* I shall therefore exhort you in the wholesome words of St. Peter: *Give all diligence to add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity: for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The Apostle still goes on, and I cannot leave him yet: *But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was once purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.* Let us not only talk and dispute of Christ, but let us indeed *put on the Lord Jesus Christ.* Having those great and precious promises which he hath given us, let us strive to be made *partakers of the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust:* and

being begotten again to a *lively hope* of enjoying Christ hereafter, *let us purify ourselves as he is pure.*

CUDWORTH.

The Christian must work out his Salvation with fear and trembling.

IT is the duty of every true Christian to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. To mention places for the proof of this were to transcribe the Bible: we can nowhere open this blessed book but we find this truth proved to us either directly, or by consequence, for it is the very genius of the Scripture. And yet it is strange in these days to see how dubiously some men (who would be thought admirers of free grace) speak of obedience and working, as if it were the brand of a legal spirit, and as great a stranger to a Christian's warrant, as it is to their practice. Oh, it is a soft and easy doctrine to bid men sit still and believe, as if God would translate men to heaven upon their couches, to tell them that all that they have now to do, is but to labour for more assurance, to praise God, and to sing hallelujahs unto him.—And so also it conduces much to their abundant comfort; does it not, to tell them that God sees no sin in them, nor requires any duty from them? That repentance and humiliation are legal things belonging only to younger persons, and not to the heirs of the promises? Oh! who could think it possible that such dreams and fantastic delusions could possess so many men's hearts that ever heard the Scripture speak in its own language, or that ever read what Christ himself, the Holy Ghost, or the blessed Apostles have written, who bid us to *work the works of God?* To give all diligence, to abound in all the fruits of righteousness? Is it possible that these notions should be dispersed by some, and entertained by others, but because it always hath been the policy of the devil, wherein he hath sped so well, still to vent those doctrines that indulge the flesh, under the name and patronage of free grace and Gospel attainments? But of this more hereafter. Let us now consider the reasons of this truth: and,

First, Wherefore is it that we are commanded to *strive that we may enter in at the strait gate?* *So to run that we may obtain?* *So to wrestle that we may be able to stand?* *So to fight that we may lay hold on eternal life?* *Not to faint in our minds; nor to grow weary of well-*

doing? Do not all these expressions imply great labour and pains? Can you strive, and run, and wrestle, and fight, and all this by doing nothing? Or were it needful to be taught not to grow faint, nor to be weary, when we have no work to do? Therefore it is the genius and sum of the Scripture to excite men to be always active and laborious in the ways of holiness and obedience.

Secondly, Consider wherefore it is that salvation is set forth to us under the notion of a reward; is it not to imply that we must work for it? A reward not indeed merited by our works; but yet a reward measured out to us, and conferred upon us, according to our works: *God will render to every one according to his works; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and immortality, he will render eternal life*, Rom. ii. 6, 7. And indeed it were very strange, if that God who will reward us with eternal life, according to our works, should yet lay a check upon the ingenuity of the new creature, thereby to account eternal life too low a motive to excite unto eternal life.

Thirdly, Consider is it not to this end that God hath implanted such an active principle of grace in the hearts of his servants, that thereby they might be enabled to work out their own salvation? If God would save you without working, why then hath he given you such an operative principle that you might work? Nay, I might affirm it, he might as well save you without grace as without works; for that is not grace that doth not put forth itself in working. Grace, if it be true, it will be working, it will rise in the thoughts, it will work in the affections, it will breathe in desires, appear in good works, and be very active and busy in the whole life and conversation. Now, not to work, is that which puts a check and restraint upon this active principle; it is to curb it in, when it would freely break forth into action upon every occasion given to it.

Fourthly, Why hath God so often promised us assistance, if it be not that thereby we should be encouraged to work? He stands by us to confirm our hearts, to strengthen our hands, to help our weakness, to quicken our deadness, to recruit our graces by continual supplies; and wherefore is all this but that we might work? God, rather than we shall not work, he himself will set us at work; nay, he will maintain us at

our work, and in our work, upon his own cost. He gives us aid, and promises assistance only for this end, that we might work out our own salvation. *We are not sufficient of ourselves*, says the Apostle, *as of ourselves to think any thing*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. What then? must we therefore sit still, because we are not sufficient? No, says he, for God, who finds us employment, will also find us strength; *our sufficiency is of God*. And therefore it is that God gives in assistances and supplies, that we might work the works of God. BR. HOPKINS.

How apt are we to misconstrue the Spirit of God to our own disadvantage! While the blessed Apostle bids us to work out our salvation *with fear and trembling*, he doth not bid us to work it out with doubt and distrust. It is the Psalmist's charge, that we should *serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice in him with trembling*; so that there is a fear without diffidence, and a trembling that may consist with joy. Trembling is an effect of fear; but this fear which we must affect, is reverential, not slavish, not distrustful. Indeed, when we look upon ourselves, and consider our own frailties and corruptions, and God's infinite justice, we have too just cause of doubt and dejection, yea, were it not for better helps, of utter despair; but when we cast up our eyes to the power of him that hath undertaken for us, and the faithfulness of him that hath promised, and the sure mercies of him that hath begun his good work in us, we can fear with confidence, and rejoice in our trembling; for what are our sins to his mercies, our unworthiness to his infinite merits, our weaknesses to his omnipotence? I will therefore so distrust myself, that I will be steadfastly confident in the God of my salvation; I will so tremble before the glorious majesty of my God, that I may not abate of the joy of his never-failing mercy. . . .

There cannot be a stronger motive to awe and obedience, than that which St. Peter enforceth, that *God is both a Father and a Judge*, 1 Pet. i. 17: the one is a title of love and mercy, the other of justice. Whatever God is, he is all that; he is all love and mercy; he is all justice. He is not so a Judge, that he hath waved the title and affection of a Father; he is not so a Father, that he will remit aught of his infinite justice as a Judge. *He is, he will*

ever be, both these in one; and we must fasten our eyes upon both these at once, and be accordingly affected unto both. He is a Father; therefore here must be a loving awe: he is a Judge; and therefore here must be an awful love and obedience. So must we lay hold upon the tender mercies of a Father, that we may rejoice continually; so must we apprehend the justice of a righteous Judge, that we do lovingly tremble. Why then should man despair? God is a Father. All the bowels of mortal and human love are straight to his. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee*, saith the Lord, Isa. xlix. 15. That which is the title of his personality in divine relation, is also the title of his gracious relation to us—Father: neither can he be other than he is styled. And, contrarily, how dare men presume, since this Father is a Judge? It is for sinful flesh and blood to be partial: foolish parents may be apt to connive at the sins of their own offspring, because theirs; either they will not see them, or not hate them, or not censure them, or not punish them: the infinite justice of a God cannot wink at our failings; there is no debt of our sin but must be paid in ourselves, or our surety. If then we call him *Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work*, why do we not *pass the time of our sojourning here in fear?*

BP. HALL.

Religion never out of place.

BUT, alas! I doubt we generally arrive not to this pitch of religion, to deny the world, and all the pomp and glory of this largely extended train of vanity; but we easily content ourselves with some external forms of religion. We are too apt to look at a garish dress and attire of religion, or to be enamoured rather with some more specious and seemingly spiritual forms, than with the true spirit and power of godliness and religion itself. We are more taken commonly with the several new fashions that the luxuriant fancies of men are apt to contrive for it, than with the real power and simplicity thereof: and while we think ourselves to be growing in our knowledge, and moving on towards a state of perfection, we do but turn up and down from one kind of form to another; we are as apt still to draw it down into

as low, worldly, and mundane rites and ordinances, as ever it was before our Saviour made that glorious reformation therein, which took away these material crutches made up of carnal observances, upon which earthly minds so much lean, and are fain to underprop their religion with, which else would tumble down and fall to nothing: except we can cast it into such a certain set of duties and system of opinions, that we may see it altogether from one end to another, we are afraid lest it should become too abstruse a thing and vanish away from us.

I would not be misunderstood to speak against those duties and ordinances which are necessary means appointed by God to promote us in the ways of piety: but I fear we are too apt to sink all our religion into these, and so to embody it, that we may as it were touch and feel it, because we are so little acquainted with the high and spiritual nature of it, which is too subtle for gross and carnal minds to converse with. I fear our vulgar sort of Christians are wont so to look upon such kind of models of divinity and religious performances, which were intended to help our dull minds to a more lively sense of God and true goodness, as those things that claim the whole of their religion: and therefore are too apt to think themselves absolved from it, except at some solemn times of more especial addresses to God; and that this wedding garment of holy thoughts and divine affections is not for every day's wearing, but only then to be put on when we come to the marriage-feast and festivals of heaven: as if religion were fast locked and bound up in some sacred solemnities, and so incarcerated and incorporated into some divine mysteries, as the superstitious heathen of old thought, that it might not stir abroad and wander too far out of these hallowed cloisters, and grow too busy with us in our secular employments. We have learned to distinguish too subtly I doubt in our lives and conversations *inter sacrum et profanum*, our religious approaches to God and our worldly affairs. I know our conversation and demeanour in this world is not nor can well be, all of a piece, and there will be several degrees of sanctity in the lives of the best men, as there were once in the land of Canaan: but yet I think a good man should always find himself upon holy ground, and never depart

so far into the affairs of this life, as to be without either the call or compass of religion; he should always think wheresoever he is *etiam ibi Dii sunt*, that God and the blessed angels are there, with whom he should converse in a way of purity. We must not think that religion serves to paint our faces, to reform our looks, or only to inform our heads, or instruct and tune our tongues; no, nor only to tie our hands, and make our outward man more demure, and bring our bodies and bodily actions into a better decorum: but its main business is to purge and reform our hearts and all the illicit actions and motions thereof.

REV. J. SMITH.

Nature of Spiritual love to God.

SOME say that all love arises from self-love; and that it is impossible in the nature of things, for any man to have any love to God, or any other being, but that love to himself must be the foundation of it. But I humbly suppose it is for want of consideration that they say so. They argue, that whoever loves God, and so desires his glory or the enjoyment of him, he desires these things as his own happiness; the glory of God, and the beholding and enjoying his perfections, are considered as things agreeable to him, tending to make him happy; he places his happiness in them, and desires them as things which (if they were obtained) would be delightful to him, or would fill him with delight and joy, and so make him happy. And so, they say, it is from self-love, or a desire of his own happiness, that he desires God should be glorified, and desires to behold and enjoy his glorious perfections. But then they ought to consider a little further, and inquire how the man came to place his happiness in God's being glorified, and in contemplating and enjoying God's perfections. There is no doubt, but that after God's glory, and the beholding his perfections, are become so agreeable to him, that he places his highest happiness in these things, then he will desire them, as he desires his own happiness. But how came these things to be so agreeable to him that he esteems it his highest happiness to glorify God, &c.? is not this the fruit of love? a man must first love God, or have his heart united to him, before he will esteem God's good his own, and before he will desire the glorifying and enjoying of God as his happiness. It is not strong

arguing, that because after a man has his heart united to God in love, as a fruit of this, he desires his glory and enjoyment as his own happiness, that therefore a desire of this happiness of his own must needs be the cause and foundation of his love: unless it be strong arguing, that because a father begat a son, that therefore his son certainly begat him. If after a man loves God, and has his heart so united to him, as to look upon God as his chief good, and on God's good as his own, it will be a consequence and fruit of this, that even self-love, or love to his own happiness, will cause him to desire the glorifying and enjoying of God; it will not thence follow, that this very exercise of self-love went before his love to God, and that his love to God was a consequence and fruit of that. Something else, entirely distinct from self-love, might be the cause of this, viz. a change made in the views of his mind, and relish of his heart: whereby he apprehends a beauty, glory, and supreme good, in God's nature, as it is in itself. This may be the thing that first draws his heart to him, and causes his heart to be united to him, prior to all considerations of his own interest or happiness, although after this, and as a fruit of this, he necessarily seeks his interest and happiness in God.

There is such a thing as a kind of love or affection that a man may have towards persons or things, which does properly arise from self-love; a preconceived relation to himself, or some respect already manifested by another to him, or some benefit already received or depended on, is truly the first foundation of his love, and what his affection does wholly arise from; and is what precedes any relish of, or delight in the nature and qualities inherent in the being beloved, as beautiful and amiable. When the first thing that draws a man's benevolence to another is the beholding those qualifications and properties in him, which appear to him lovely in themselves, and the subject of them, on this account, worthy of esteem and good-will, love arises in a very different manner, than when it first arises from some gift bestowed by another, or depended on from him, as a judge loves and favours a man that has bribed him; or from the relation he supposes another has to him, as a man who loves another, because he looks upon him as his child.—

When love to another arises thus, it does truly and properly arise from self-love.

That kind of affection to God or Jesus Christ, which does thus properly arise from self-love, cannot be a truly gracious and spiritual love, as appears from what has been said already: for self-love is a principle entirely natural, and as much in the hearts of devils as angels; and therefore surely nothing that is the mere result of it can be supernatural and divine, in the manner before described. Christ plainly speaks of this kind of love, as what is nothing beyond the love of wicked men. *If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them; Luke vi. 32.* And the devil himself knew that that kind of respect to God which was so mercenary, as to be only for benefits received or depended on (which is all one), is worthless in the sight of God; otherwise he never would have made use of such a slander before God, against Job, as in Job i. 9, 10, *Doth Job serve God for nought? hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house?*

Nor would God ever have implicitly allowed the objection to have been good, in case the accusation had been true, by allowing that the matter should be tried, and that Job should be so dealt with, that it might appear in the event, whether Job's respect to God was thus mercenary or no, and by putting the proof of the sincerity and goodness of his respect upon that issue.

It is unreasonable to think otherwise, than that the first foundation of a true love

to God, is that whereby he is in himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the supreme loveliness of his nature. This is certainly what makes him chiefly amiable. What chiefly makes a man, or any creature lovely, is his excellency; and so what chiefly renders God lovely, and must undoubtedly be the chief ground of true love, is his excellency. God's nature, or the divinity, is infinitely excellent; yea, it is infinite beauty, brightness, and glory itself. But how can that be true love of this excellent and lovely nature, which is not built on the foundation of its true loveliness? how can that be true love of beauty and brightness, which is not for beauty and brightness' sake? how can that be a true prizing of that which is in itself infinitely worthy and precious, which is not for the sake of its worthiness and preciousness? This infinite excellency of the divine nature, as it is in itself, is the true ground of all that is good in God in any respect; but how can a man truly and rightly love God, without loving him for that excellency in him, which is the foundation of all that is in any manner of respect good or desirable in him? they whose affection to good is founded first on his profitableness to them, their affection begins at the wrong end; they regard God only for the utmost limit of the stream of divine good, where it touches them, and reaches their interest; and have no respect to that infinite glory of God's nature, which is the original good, and the true fountain of all good, the first fountain of all loveliness of every kind, and so the first foundation of all true love.

PRES. EDWARDS.

SECTION III.—ON HOLINESS.

Nature of Holiness, and how it is to be obtained.

LET me not be thought tedious, or be accused of running into needless repetitions, in pressing this point with so much earnestness. It is, in fact, a point which can never be too much insisted on. It is the cardinal point on which the whole of Christianity turns; on which it is peculiarly proper in this place to be perfectly distinct. There have been some who have imagined that the wrath of God was to be deprecated, or his favour conciliated, by

austerities and penances, or even by forms and ceremonies, and external observances. But all men of enlightened understandings, who acknowledge the moral government of God, must also acknowledge that vice must offend, and virtue delight him. In short they must, more or less, assent to the Scripture declaration, *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* But the grand distinction which subsists between the true Christian and all other religionists (the class of persons in particular whom it is my object to address) is concerning the nature of this holiness, and the way in which

it is to be obtained. The views entertained by the latter of the nature of holiness are of all degrees of inadequateness ; and they conceive it is to be obtained by their own natural unassisted efforts : or, if they admit some vague indistinct notion of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, it is unquestionably obvious, on conversing with them, that this does not constitute the main practical ground of their dependence. But the nature of that holiness which the true Christian seeks to possess, is no other than the restoration of the image of God to his soul ; and as to the manner of acquiring it, disclaiming, with indignation, every idea of attaining it by his own strength, he rests altogether on the operation of God's Holy Spirit, which is promised to all who cordially embrace the Gospel. He knows, therefore, that this holiness is not to *precede* his reconciliation with God, and be its *cause* ; but to *follow* it, and be its *effect*. That, in short, it is by *faith in Christ only** that he is to be justified in the sight of God ; to be delivered from the condition of a child of wrath, and a slave of Satan ; to be adopted into the family of God ; to become an heir of God and joint heir with Christ, entitled to all the privileges which belong to this high relation ; here, to the Spirit of Grace, and a partial renewal after the image of his Creator ; hereafter, to the more perfect possession of the divine likeness, and an inheritance of eternal glory.

And, as it is in this way that, in obedience to the dictates of the Gospel, the true Christian must originally become possessed of the vital spirit and living principle of universal holiness ; so, in order to grow in grace, he must also study in the same school : finding in the consideration of the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, and in the contemplation of the life and character and sufferings of our blessed Saviour, the elements of all practical wisdom, and an inexhaustible storehouse of instructions and motives, no otherwise to be so well supplied. From the neglect of these peculiar doctrines arise the main practical errors of the bulk of professed Christians. These gigantic truths retained in view, would put to shame the littleness of their dwarfish morality. It would be impossible for them to make these harmo-

nise with their inadequate conceptions of the wretchedness and danger of our natural state, which is represented in Scripture as having so powerfully called forth the compassion of God, that he sent his only-begotten Son to rescue us. Where now are their low views of the worth of the soul, when means like these were taken to redeem it ? Where now their inadequate conceptions of the guilt of sin, for which in the divine counsels it seemed requisite that an atonement no less costly should be made than that of the blood of the only-begotten Son of God ? How can they reconcile their low standard of Christian practice with the representation of our being *temples of the Holy Ghost* ; their cold sense of obligation, and scanty grudging returns of service, with the glowing gratitude of those who, having been *delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son*, may well conceive that the labours of a whole life will be but an imperfect expression of their thankfulness ?

The peculiar doctrines of the Gospel being once admitted, the conclusions which have been now suggested are clear and obvious deductions of reason. But our neglect of these important truths is still less pardonable, because they are distinctly and repeatedly applied in Scripture to the very purposes in question ; and the whole superstructure of Christian morals is grounded on their deep and ample basis. Sometimes these truths are represented in Scripture, generally, as furnishing Christians with a vigorous and ever present principle of universal obedience : and almost every particular Christian duty is occasionally traced to them as to its proper source. They are every where represented as warming the hearts of the people of God on earth with continual admiration, and thankfulness, and love, and joy ; as enabling them to triumph over the attack of the last great enemy, and, as calling forth afresh in heaven the ardent effusions of their unexhausted gratitude.

If then we would indeed be *filled with wisdom and spiritual understanding*, if we would *walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God* ; here let us fix our eyes ! *Laying aside every weight, and the sin that does so easily beset us, let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

* Here again let it be remarked, that faith, where genuine, is always accompanied with repentance, abhorrence of sin, &c,

LOOKING UNTO JESUS, *the Author and Finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*; Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Here best we may learn the infinite importance of Christianity; how little it deserves to be treated in that slight and superficial way in which it is in these days regarded by the bulk of nominal Christians, who are apt to think it enough, and almost equally pleasing to God, to be religious in any way, and upon any system. What exquisite folly must it be to risk the soul on such a presumption, in direct opposition to the dictates of reason, and the express declaration of the word of God! *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* . . .

Thus, never let it be forgotten, the main distinction between real Christianity and the system of the bulk of nominal Christians, chiefly consists in the different place which is assigned in the two schemes to the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. These, in the scheme of nominal Christians, if admitted at all, appear but like the stars of the firmament to the ordinary eye. Those splendid luminaries draw forth perhaps, occasionally, a transient expression of admiration when we behold their beauty, or hear of their distances, magnitudes, or properties: now and then too we are led, perhaps, to muse upon their possible uses; but however curious as subjects of speculation, it must after all be confessed, they twinkle to the common observer with a vain and idle lustre; and, except in the dreams of the astrologer, have no influence on human happiness, or any concern with the course and order of the world. But to the real Christian, on the contrary, these peculiar doctrines constitute the centre to which he gravitates! the very sun of his system! the origin of all that is excellent and lovely! the source of light, and life, and motion, and genial warmth, and plastic energy! Dim is the light of Reason, and cold and comfortless our state, while left to her unassisted guidance. Even the Old Testament itself, though a revelation from heaven, shines with but feeble and scanty rays. But the blessed truths of the Gospel are now unveiled to our eyes, and we are called upon to behold and to enjoy *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ*,

in the full radiance of its meridian splendour. The words of inspiration best express our highly favoured state—*we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

THOU art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, ETERNAL WORD;
From Thee departing, they are lost, and rove •
At random, without honour, hope, or peace:
From Thee is all that soothes the life of man;
His high endeavour, and his glad success;
His strength to suffer and his will to serve.
But O! Thou bounteous Giver of all good!
Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown:
Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor,
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.

WILBERFORCE.

How is Man to attain to so high a degree of Holiness?

BUT who am I, poor, proud sinful dust and ashes, that I should expect ever to live so holy, so heavenly, as is here supposed? *Can grapes be gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?* Can the fruit be sweet when the root is bitter? or the streams healthful when the fountain is poisoned? No; I must either get me a new and better heart, or else it will be impossible for me ever to lead a new and better life. But how must I come by this pearl of inestimable value, a *new heart*? Can I purchase it with my own riches, or find it in my own field? Can I raise it from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven, or from myself to God? Alas! I have endeavoured it, but I find, by woful experience, I cannot attain to it. I have been lifting and heaving again and again to raise it out of the mire and clay of sin and corruption; but, alas! it will not stir. I have rubbed and chafed it with one threatening after another, and all to get heat and life into it, but still it is as cold and dead as ever. I have brought it to the promises, and set it under the droppings of the sanctuary; I have shown it the beauty of Christ and the deformity of sin; but yet it is a hard and sinful, an earthly and sensual heart still. What therefore shall I do with it? O my God, I bring it unto thee! Thou that madest it a heart at first, canst only make it a new heart now. O do thou purify and refine it, and *renew a right spirit within me!* Do thou take it into thy hands, and, out of thine infinite goodness, new mould it up, by

thine own grace, into an exact conformity to thine own will! Do thou but give me a new heart, and I shall promise thee, by thy grace, to lead a new life and become a new creature! Do thou but clear the fountain, and I shall endeavour to look to the streams that flow from it!

BP. BEVERIDGE.

Different kinds of perfection which are, and are not, attainable.

It becomes the wisdom of God to raise his people by degrees to the highest pitch of holiness. As, in the creation of the first world, he began with a rude chaos and indigested mass, which in six successive days he fashioned into this beautiful frame, till, having given the finishing hand, *he rested on the Sabbath*, Gen. ii. 2; so in the creation of the new world of grace, beginning with nothing, he gradually leads his people higher and higher, till on the expiration of this earthly week, on the dawn of the heavenly sabbath, he crowns them at once with holiness and glory.

It cannot indeed be denied, that sometimes the Scripture makes mention of some, who are said to be *perfect* even in this life: but it is to be observed, that the term *perfection* is not always used in the same sense. For, 1st. There is a perfection of SINCERITY consisting in this, that a man serves God with an unfeigned heart, without any reigning hypocrisy. In this sense it is said of Job, that he was תם וישר, *perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil*, Job i. 1. In the same sense, Hezekiah protests that he had walked before God *in truth and with a perfect heart, and done what was good in his eyes*, Isa. xxxviii. 3. 2dly. There is a perfection of PARTS; and that both *subjective*, with respect to the whole man, in so far as he is *sanctified wholly, in spirit, soul and body*, 1 Thess. v. 23; and *objective*, with respect to the whole law, when all and every one of the duties prescribed by God are observed without exception. Of this David was speaking, Psal. cxix. 128, *I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way*. And it is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i. 6, *and they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless*. 3dly. There is a COMPARATIVE perfection ascribed to

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those who are advanced in knowledge, faith, and sanctification, in comparison of those who are still infants and untaught: in this manner John distinguishes little children, young men, and fathers, 1 John ii. 12, 13. In that sense Paul speaks of the *perfect*, 1 Cor. ii. 6. and Phil. iii. 15. 4thly. There is also an evangelical perfection, or with a veil or covering of grace, according to which these persons are looked upon as perfect, who sincerely endeavour after perfection, God, for the sake of Christ, graciously accepting the attempts of a ready mind, and accounting every thing to be done, because what is not done is forgiven. The Apostle speaks of this, *For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*, 2 Cor. viii. 12. Thus, *we are complete in Christ*, Col. ii. 10; his most perfect righteousness covering all our defects. However, this is to be understood in a proper manner; for the judgment of God is always according to truth: he so judges of us and our actions, as they are; and seeing we ourselves and our actions are imperfect, he cannot but judge us to be so. This is what we would say agreeable to Scripture,—that God, on account of the most perfect obedience of Christ, graciously accepts the sincerity of his people, nor less bountifully rewards them, than if their holiness was in every respect complete. 5thly, and lastly, There is also a perfection of DEGREES, by which a person performs all the commands of God, with the full exertion of all his powers, without the least defect, having rooted up every depraved lust. This is what the law of God requires. And this is that perfection which we deny the saints to have in this life, though we willingly allow them all the other kinds above mentioned.

WITSIUS.

The Cross of Christ the greatest Incentive to a Holy Life.

THIS consideration is most useful to render us very humble and sensible of our weakness, our vileness, our wretchedness. For how low was that our fall, from which we could not be raised without such a depression of God's only Son? How great is that impotency, which did need such a

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succour to relieve it? How abominable must be that iniquity which might not be expiated without so costly a sacrifice? How deplorable is that misery which could not be removed without commutation of so strange a suffering? Would the Son of God have so *emptied* and abased himself for nothing?—would he have endured such pains and ignominies for a trifle? No, surely; if our guilt had been slight, if our case had been tolerable, the divine wisdom would have chosen a more cheap and easy remedy for us.

Is it not madness of us to be conceited for any worth in ourselves, to confide in any merit of our works, to glory in any thing belonging to us, to fancy ourselves brave, fine, happy persons, worthy of great respect and esteem; when as our unworthiness, our demerit, our forlorn estate did extort from the most gracious God a displeasure needing such a reconciliation, did impose upon the most glorious Son of God a necessity to undergo such a punishment in our behalf?

How can we reasonably pretend to any honour, or justly assume any regard to ourselves, when as the First-born of Heaven, *the Lord of glory*, partaker of Divine Majesty, was fain to *make himself of no reputation*, to put himself into *the garb of a servant*, and, under the imputation of a malefactor, to bear such disgrace and infamy in our room, in lieu of the confusion due to us?

What more palpable confutation can there be of human vanity and arrogance, of all *lofty imaginations*, all presumptuous confidences, all turgid humours, all fond self-pleasings and self-admirings, than is that tragical cross, wherein, as in a glass, our foul deformity, our pitiful meanness, our helpless infirmity, our sad wofulness are so plainly represented?

Well surely may we say with St. Austin, 'Let man now at length blush to be proud, for whom God is made so humble.' [And since (as he doth add) 'this great disease of soul did bring down the Almighty Physician from Heaven, did humble him to the form of a servant, did subject him to contumelies, did suspend him on a cross, that this tumour by virtue of so great a medicine might be cured;'] may not he well be presumed incurable, who is not cured of his pride by this medicine; in whom neither the reason of the case, nor the

force of such an example can work humility?

But farther, while this contemplation doth breed sober humility, it also should preserve us from base abjectness of mind: for it doth evidently demonstrate, that, according to God's infallible judgment, we are very considerable; that our souls are capable of high regard; that it is a great pity we should be lost and abandoned to ruin. For surely, had not God much esteemed and respected us, he would not for our sakes have so debased himself, or deigned to endure so much for our recovery; divine justice would not have exacted or accepted such a ransom for our souls, had they been of little worth. We should not therefore slight ourselves, nor demean ourselves like sorry contemptible wretches, as if we deserved no consideration, no pity from ourselves; as if we thought our souls not worth saving, which yet our Lord thought good to purchase at so dear a rate. By so despising or disregarding ourselves, do we not condemn the sentiments, do we not vilify the sufferings of our Lord; so with a pitiful meanness of spirit joining the most unworthy injustice and ingratitude?—Again,

How can we reflect upon this event without extreme displeasure against, and hearty detestation of our sins?—those sins which indeed did bring such tortures and such disgraces upon our blessed Redeemer. Judas, the wretch who betrayed him, the Jewish priests who did accuse and prosecute him, the wicked rout which did abusively insult over him, those cruel hands that smote him, those pitiless hearts that scorned him, those poisonous tongues that mocked him and reviled him, all those who were the instruments and abettors of his affliction—how do we loathe and abhor them? How do we detest their names, and execrate their memories? But how much greater reason have we to abominate our sins, which were the true, the principal actors of all that woful tragedy? *He was delivered for our offences*: they were indeed the traitors, which by the hands of Judas delivered him up. *He that knew no sin, was made sin for us*, that is, was accused, was condemned, was executed as a sinner for us. It was therefore we, who by our sins did impeach him; the spiteful priests were but our advocates:

we by them did adjudge and sentence him; Pilate was but drawn in against his will and conscience, to be our spokesman in that behalf: we by them did inflict that horrid punishment on him; the Roman executioners were but our representatives therein. *He became a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13: that is, all the mockery, derision, and contumely he endured, did proceed from us; the silly people were but properties acting our parts. Our sins were they that cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him*, with clamours more loud and more importunate than did all the Jewish rabble: it was they, which by the borrowed throats of that base people did so outrageously persecute him. *He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities*: it was they which, by the hands of the fierce soldiers, and of the rude populace, as by senseless engines, did buffet and scourge him; they by the nails and thorns did pierce his flesh, and rend his sacred body. Upon them therefore it is most just and fit that we should turn our hatred, that we should discharge our indignation.

And what in reason can be more powerful toward working penitential sorrow and remorse, than reflexion upon such horrible effects, proceeding from our sins? How can we forbear earnestly to grieve, considering ourselves by them to have been the perfidious betrayers, the unjust slanderers, the cruel persecutors, and barbarous murderers of a Person so innocent and lovely, so good and benign, so great and glorious; of God's own dear Son, of our best Friend, of our most gracious Redeemer?

If ingenuity will not operate so far, and hereby melt us into contrition; yet surely this consideration must needs affect us with a religious fear. For can we otherwise than tremble to think upon the heinous guilt of our sins, upon the dreadful fierceness of God's wrath against them, upon the impartial severity of divine judgment for them, all so manifestly discovered, all so livelily set forth in this dismal spectacle? If the view of an ordinary execution is apt to beget in us some terror, some dread of the law, some reverence toward authority; what awful impressions should this singular example of divine justice work upon us?

How greatly we should be moved thereby, what affections it should raise in us,

we may even learn from the most inanimate creatures: for the whole world did seem affected thereat with horror and confusion; the frame of things was discomposed and disturbed; all nature did feel a kind of compassion and compunction for it. The sun (as from aversion and shame) did hide his face, leaving the world covered for three hours with mournful blackness; the bowels of the earth did yearn and quake; the rocks did split; the veil of the temple was rent; the graves did open themselves, and the dead bodies were roused up. And can we then (who are the most concerned in the event) be more stupid than the earth, more obdurate than rocks, more drowsy than interred carcasses, the most insensible and immoveable things in nature?—But farther,

How can the meditation on this event do otherwise than hugely deter us from all wilful disobedience and commission of sin? For how thereby can we violate such engagements, and thwart such an example of obedience? How thereby can we abuse so wonderful goodness, and disoblige so transcendent charity? How thereby can we reject that gentle dominion over us, which our Redeemer did so dearly purchase, or renounce *the Lord that bought us* at so high a rate? With what heart can we bring up on the stage, and act over that direful tragedy, renewing all that pain and all that disgrace to our Saviour, as the Apostle teacheth that we do by apostacy, *crucifying to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame*? Can we without horror *tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing*; (as the same divine Apostle saith all wilful transgressors do;) vilifying that most sacred and precious blood, so freely shed for the demonstration of God's mercy, and ratification of his gracious intentions toward us, as a thing of no special worth or consideration; despising all his so kind and painful endeavours for our salvation; defeating his most charitable purposes, and earnest desires for our welfare; rendering all his so bitter and loathsome sufferings in regard to us utterly vain and fruitless, yea indeed very hurtful and pernicious? For if the cross do not save us from our sins, it will much aggravate their guilt, and augment their punishment;

bringing a severer condemnation, and a sadder ruin on us.—Again,

This consideration affordeth very strong engagements to the practice of charity towards our neighbour. For what heart can be so hard that the blood of the cross cannot mollify into a charitable and compassionate sense? Can we forbear to love those toward whom our Saviour did bear so tender affection, for whom he was pleased to sustain so woful tortures and indignities? Shall we not, in obedience to his most urgent commands, in conformity to his most notable example, in grateful return to him for his benefits, who thus did gladly suffer for us, discharge this most sweet and easy duty towards his beloved friends? Shall we not be willing, by parting with a little superfluous stuff for the relief of our poor brother, to requite and gratify him, who, to succour us in our distress, most bountifully did part with his wealth, with his glory, with his pleasure, with his life itself? Shall we not meekly comport with an infirmity, not bear a petty neglect, not forgive a small injury to our brother, when as our Lord did for us, and from us bear a cross, to procure remission for our innumerable and most heinous affronts and offences against Almighty God? Can a heart void of mercy and pity, with any reason or modesty pretend to the mercies and compassions of the cross? Can we hope, that God for Christ's sake will pardon us, if we for Christ's sake will not forgive our neighbour?

Can we hear our Lord saying to us, *This is my command, That ye love one another, as I have loved you; and, Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another?* Can we hear St. Paul exhorting, *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour; and, We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak—For even Christ pleased not himself, but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me?* Can we attend to St. John's arguing, *Beloved, if God so loved us, then ought we also to love one another. Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: wherefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren?*

Can we, I say, consider such precepts,

and such discourses, without effectually being disposed to comply with them for the sake of our crucified Saviour; all whose life was nothing else but one continual recommendation and enforcement of this duty, but his death especially was a pattern most obliging, most incentive thereto? This use of the point is the more to be regarded, because the Apostle doth apply it hereto; for having pathetically exhorted the Philippians to all kinds of charity and humble condescension, he subjoineth, *Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus;—Who, being in the form of God, &c. Phil. ii. 5.*

But furthermore, what can be more operative than this point toward breeding a disregard of this world with all its deceitful vanities, and mischievous delights; toward reconciling our minds to the worst condition into which it can bring us; toward supporting our hearts under the heaviest pressures of affliction which it can lay upon us? For can we reasonably expect, can we eagerly affect, can we ardently desire great prosperity, when as the Son of God, our Lord and Master, did only taste such adversity? How can we refuse, in submission to God's pleasure, contentedly to bear a slight grievance, when as our Saviour gladly did bear a cross, infinitely more distasteful to carnal will and sense than any that can befall us? Who now can admire those splendid trifles, which our Lord never did regard in his life, and which at his death only did serve to mock and abuse him? Who can relish those sordid pleasures, of which he living did not vouchsafe to taste, and the contraries whereof he dying chose to feel in all extremity? Who can disdain or despise a state of sorrow and disgrace, which he, by voluntary susception of it, hath so dignified and graced; by which we so near resemble and become conformable to him; by which we concur and partake with him; yea, by which in some cases we may promote, and after a sort complete his designs, *filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh?*

Who now can hugely prefer being esteemed, approved, favoured, commended by men, before infamy, reproach, derision, and persecution from them; especially when these do follow conscientious adherence to righteousness? Who can be very

ambitious of worldly honour and repute, covetous of wealth, or greedy of pleasure, who doth observe the Son of God choosing rather to hang upon a cross, than to sit upon a throne; inviting the clamours of scorn and spite, rather than acclamations of blessing and praise; divesting himself of all secular power, pomp, plenty, conveniences, and solaces; embracing the garb of a slave, and the repute of a malefactor, before the dignity and respect of a Prince, which were his due, which he most easily could have obtained?

Can we imagine it a very happy thing, to be high and prosperous in this world, to swim in affluence and pleasure? Can we take it for a misery, to be mean and low, to conflict with some wants and straits here; seeing the Fountain of all happiness did himself purposely condescend to so forlorn a state, and was pleased to become so deep a sufferer? If with devout eyes of our mind we do behold our Lord hanging naked upon a gibbet, besmeared all over with streams of his own blood, groaning under smart anguish of pain, encompassed with all sorts of disgraceful abuses, *yielding* (as it was foretold of him) *his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them who plucked off the hair, hiding not his face from shame and spitting*, Isa. lvi.; will not the imagination of such a spectacle dim the lustre of all earthly grandeurs and beauties, damp the sense of all carnal delights and satisfactions, quash all that extravagant glee which we can find in any wild frolics or riotous merriments? Will it not stain all our pride, and check our wantonness? Will it not dispose our minds to be sober, placing our happiness in things of another nature, seeking our content in matters of higher importance; preferring obedience to the will of God, before compliance with the fancies and desires of men; according to that precept of St. Peter, *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind—so as no longer to live the remaining time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God?*

DR. BARROW.

The Practice of Holiness flows from the Love of God.

CHRISTIAN virtue has a deeper and bet-

ter original than any love of virtue whatsoever, or than any complacency in one's own actions. But faith, which represents God to the soul as infinitely good and perfectly holy, and the most bountiful rewarder of good actions, as also his laws as full of equity and justice, inflames the soul with a love of a gracious God, and of his most equitable laws, and to deem nothing preferable to, nothing more valuable than, by a conformity to those laws, to resemble him in his measure in holiness, and in that resemblance to please him. That God looking down as it were out of himself, and from heaven, may also find upon earth what to delight himself in, as his copy; which is the highest pleasure of a holy soul. So that it loves not virtue for itself alone, but for God whose image it is, and whom in the practice of virtue it pleases. From this love to God springs the practice of true holiness.

I cannot but transcribe an excellent passage of Clemens Alexandrinus to this purpose, who, Stromat. lib. v. p. 532, thus gives us the picture of a holy person: 'He who obeys the bare call so far as he is called, labours after knowledge neither from fear nor from pleasure; for he does not consider whether any profitable gain or external pleasure will ensue, but, being constrained by the love of what is truly amiable, and thereby excited to his duty, he is a pious worshipper of God. Were we therefore to suppose him to have received from God a liberty to what was forbidden, without any apprehension of punishment; nay moreover, had he a promise of receiving the reward of the blessed, and besides was he persuaded that his actions should escape the notice of God, (which by the way is impossible,) he could never be prevailed with to act contrary to right reason, after he had once chosen what is really lovely and eligible of itself, and on that account to be loved and desired.' Than which nothing can be said more sublime.

He would have a holy or sanctified person do every thing from a principle of love. 'It becomes him who is perfect, to be in the exercise of love, and so endeavour after the divine favour and friendship, while he performs the commandments by love.' But this love has not renown, nor any other advantage but virtue itself, pure virtue, for its object: so he flames his life

after the image and resemblance of God, no longer for the sake of renown, or, as the philosophers speak, *εὐκλείαν* of a *splendid name*; nor from the view of reward, either from God or men. Moreover, what renders virtue amiable to him, is not that philosophical agreement it has with right reason, but because he beholds in it a resemblance to God, than which nothing can be imagined more amiable: for thus he describes it:—what is *truly good*, he calls *truly desirable*, saying, *it is good by an assimilation to God to become impassive and virtuous*.

Yet we are not so to understand these things, as if in the practice of holiness we were not allowed to pay any regard to our own advantage, and that all love of ourselves ought in this case quite to disappear. We are not only allowed but commanded to love ourselves; nor are we bound to love our neighbour without a love for ourselves. And this is not written, but a natural law, which we have learned from no other quarter, but have received it from nature herself: *no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it*, Eph. v. 29. We may also be lawfully stirred up to the diligent practice of holiness by this love of ourselves. God himself, by this enticing motive, invites his people, promising that *their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 58. And to what, pray, tend all those promises by which he has recommended his commandments to us, but that, being excited by a desire of them, we should more cheerfully obey him? Not to love the promised good, is to throw contempt on the goodness of a promising God. By the love of them not to be stirred up to piety, is to abuse them to some other purpose than God ever intended. David himself confessed, that the commandments of God were, even on that account, *more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb; because in keeping of them there is a great reward*, Psal. xix. 10, 12. And the faith of Moses is for the same reason commended, because *he had a respect unto the recompense of the reward*, Heb. xi. 26. Nay, that faith is required as necessary for all who come to God, whereby they may believe that *he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, verse 6.

But then here also the love of ourselves

ought to spring from the love of God, be subordinate thereto, and rendered back to him. We must not love God on our own account, so as to consider ourselves as the end, and God as the means, by which we are made happy in the enjoyment of him; but because we are God's property, whom we ought to love above all, and therefore for his sake we are bound to ourselves. We are further to seek our own good, that therein we may taste the sweetness of the Lord, and that thereby we may be so much the more improved and enriched as God's peculiar treasure. Thus the love of ourselves is at last swallowed up in that ocean of divine love.

WITSIUS.

Communion with God the only stay of Holy Duties.

CHRISTIANS, you may lose time in the very service of God, if you are not careful therein to converse with him. Take heed of a light spirit in serious performances. God looks upon the heart. Some serious preparation is necessary before you approach the presence of the high and holy God. It is a blessed sight to see souls working towards God, gasping and panting after the Lord Jesus Christ. O labour for such a frame of heart, and bewail a narrow and contracted spirit. Do not perform duties for duties' sake, so as to make duties the end of duties; but as the means by which the soul may draw nigh to God, and meet with him. The countenance and presence of God in a duty, is the very suburbs of glory, yea, the very gate of heaven. Let this be in thy thoughts, and the very purpose of thy heart, and expect it vehemently in every access to God. Let thy soul follow hard after God, and say, One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. Duties alone are only the outward court, only the form, the shell of religion; as pipes without water, as sails without wind, or as a body without a soul, that hath no life. The increase of your grace and holiness depends upon your acquaintance and communion with the God of grace. JOHN FOX.

Why Christianity requires so high a degree of Purity and Holiness.

WE have a very low and imperfect idea

of the nature of Christianity, if we consider it only as it stands connected with this life, and our happiness on earth. Doubtless it ministers to our peace and comfort *here*; it regulates our passions, and directs us to discharge the duties of our several stations with fidelity and diligence: but the same end is proposed, though it may not be so fully attained, by every scheme of philosophy and religion which have been taught in the world. Christianity has a view to far nobler and more extensive objects: it is to be considered as connected with God's glory, as well as man's happiness; with the honour of Christ, as well as man's salvation; and with the boundless ages of eternity, as well as the few years of man's existence upon earth. The plan was formed; the sacrifice of the Lamb of God appointed; and men were destined to inhabit the realms of glory, before the foundations of the world were laid. The ultimate end was to bring them to Heaven; the means, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the sanctifying power of his Spirit; the subordinate end, the preparation of a corrupt race for that state of glory which they who were made meet for it should inherit.

The consideration of such an end in view, goes far to explain the reasons why such means are used, and why the purity and holiness required are so very great. Imagine the chief object of the Gospel to be that of regulating our unruly passions, so that we may pass our lives in ease and comfort here; and there appears but little reason why the Son of God should be our Redeemer, or why we should need the teaching and sanctification of his Spirit. The light and strength of reason might accomplish this end; or, at least, a much smaller portion of virtue than Christianity requires would be sufficient to attain it. There would be no occasion for that high degree of self-denial; that mortification of sin; that deadness to the world; that knowledge of God and his attributes, and those holy affections which it enjoins. A Deist might be a good neighbour, a useful citizen, a tender father, and a kind friend.—But take into consideration a future state, the nature of Heaven, the glory of God and of Christ; and we see that a real Christian only is fitted for the inheritance of the saints in light. He alone possesses those dispositions, those sentiments of de-

votion, those holy affections which are the proper qualifications for such a state. The morality of a Deist would be sufficient, were his soul as mortal as his body; but when we consider man as an immortal spirit, training up for happiness in Heaven, we see the absolute need of the Gospel to prepare him for it.

Christianity, then, is intended to make us meet for Heaven. By nature we are unfit for that blessed place: our desires and pleasures, our habits of acting and modes of thinking, the motives and principles by which our conduct is framed, are all unsuitable. We could contribute nothing to the bliss of its inhabitants, nor could they minister to ours. The very enjoyments of the place would be no enjoyments to us.—But by the influence of the Gospel, where it strikes root in the heart, a new and Divine life is begun; in which may be perceived the rudiments of heavenly virtue, the seeds of infinite happiness, and the elements of eternal glory. There may be traced in it the same principles which operate in the glorified spirits themselves; the same end in view,—the glory of God; the same renunciation of our own will; the same agency producing peace and holiness, namely, the Holy Spirit; the same sentiments of gratitude, and songs of praise, and objects of adoration; the same harmony and love; the same sources of refined and sacred pleasure. The difference in all these respects lies rather in the degree of strength, and purity, and completeness, than in the kind. Every thing below is weak, is imperfect, is defiled; but, as far as there is the spirit of true Christianity at all, it is of the same nature, has the same end, is produced by the same Agent, as the blessedness of Heaven.

Consider Christianity in this light, and we shall see why it should require from us a much higher degree of purity and holiness, and other kinds of principles and affections, than would be necessary were its operation confined to the present world. The nature of the education which we give to a child is directed by the station of life which he is intended afterwards to fill. To the heir of a great empire we should endeavour to communicate not merely the principles of honesty, frugality, and common justice; but virtues of a higher and nobler stamp; such as munificence, mag-

nanimity, and comprehension of mind. Now this life is our school for Heaven; and, under the tuition of the Gospel, we are trained for the exercises and enjoyments of Heaven. Hence a high degree of purity and strictness is demanded;—desires rising above this sordid earth, and stretching into immortality; holy affections and heavenly graces, such as will be called into exercise in that better state, and make us meet to enjoy it.

REV. H. VENN.

Beauty of Holiness.

WHEN the true beauty and amiableness of the holiness, or true moral good, that is in divine things is discovered to the soul, it, as it were, opens a new world to its views. This shews the glory of all the perfections of God, and of every thing appertaining to the Divine Being. For, as was observed before, the beauty of all arises from God's moral perfection. This shews the glory of all God's works, both of creation and providence. For it is the special glory of them, that God's holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness, are so manifested in them; and without these moral perfections, there would be no glory in that power and skill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God's moral perfections, is the special end of all the works of God's hands. By this sense of the moral beauty of divine things, is understood the sufficiency of Christ as a Mediator; for it is only by the discovery of the beauty of the moral perfection of Christ, that the believer is let into the knowledge of the excellency of his person, so as to know any thing more of it than the devils do; and it is only by the knowledge of the excellency of Christ's person, that any know his sufficiency as a mediator; for the latter depends upon, and arises from the former. It is by seeing the excellency of Christ's person, that the saints are made sensible of the preciousness of his blood, and its sufficiency to atone for sin: for therein consists the preciousness of Christ's blood, that it is the blood of so excellent and amiable a person. And on this depends the meritoriousness of his obedience, and sufficiency and prevalence of his intercession. By this sight of the moral beauty of divine things, is seen the beauty of the way of

salvation by Christ; for that consists in the beauty of the moral perfections of God, which wonderfully shines forth in every step of this method of salvation, from beginning to end. By this is seen the fitness and suitableness of this way; for this wholly consists in its tendency to deliver us from sin and hell, and to bring us to the happiness which consists in the possession and enjoyment of moral good, in a way sweetly agreeing with God's moral perfections. And in the way's being contrived so as to attain these ends, consists the excellent wisdom of that way. By this is seen the excellency of the word of God. Take away all the moral beauty and sweetness in the Word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead letter, a dry, lifeless, tasteless thing. By this is seen the true foundation of our duty, the worthiness of God to be so esteemed, honoured, loved, submitted to, and served, as he requires of us, and the amiableness of the duties themselves that are required of us. And by this is seen the true evil of sin: for he who sees the beauty of holiness, must necessarily see the hatefulness of sin, its contrary. By this men understand the true glory of Heaven, which consists in the beauty and happiness that is in holiness. By this is seen the amiableness and happiness of both saints and angels. He that sees the beauty of holiness, or true moral good, sees the greatest and most important thing in the world, which is the fulness of all things, without which all the world is empty, no better than nothing, yea, worse than nothing. Unless this is seen, nothing is seen that is worth the seeing; for there is no other true excellency or beauty. Unless this be understood, nothing is understood that is worthy of the exercise of the noble faculty of understanding. This is the beauty of the Godhead, and the divinity of Divinity, (if I may so speak,) the good of the infinite Fountain of good; without which God himself (if that were possible to be) would be an infinite evil; without which we ourselves had better never have been; and without which there had better have been no being. He therefore in effect knows nothing, that knows not this; his knowledge is but the shadow of knowledge, or the form of knowledge, as the Apostle calls it. Well therefore may the Scriptures represent those who are destitute of that spiritual sense, by

which is perceived the beauty of holiness, as totally blind, deaf, and senseless, yea, dead. And well may regeneration, in which this divine sense is given to the soul by its Creator, be represented as opening the blind eyes, and raising the dead, and bringing a person into a new world. For if what has been said be considered, it will be manifest, that when a person has this sense and knowledge given him, he will view nothing as he did before; though before he knew all things *after the flesh, yet henceforth he will know them so no more; and he is become a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*; agreeable to 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.

And besides the things that have been already mentioned, there arises from this sense of spiritual beauty, a true experimental knowledge of religion, which is of itself as it were a new world of knowledge. He that sees not the beauty of holiness, knows not what one of the graces of God's Spirit is; he is destitute of any idea or conception of all gracious exercises of soul, and all holy comforts and delights, and all effects of the saving influences of the Spirit of God on the heart; and so is ignorant of the greatest works of God, the most important and glorious effects of his power upon the creature: and also is wholly ignorant of the saints as saints; he knows not what they are; and in effect is ignorant of the whole spiritual world.

Things being thus, it plainly appears, that God's implanting that spiritual supernatural sense which has been spoken of, makes a great change in a man. And were it not for the very imperfect degree, in which this sense is commonly given at first, or the small degree of this glorious light that first dawns upon the soul; the change made by this spiritual opening of the eyes in conversion, would be much greater, and more remarkable every way, than if a man, who had been born blind, and with only the other four senses, should continue so a long time, and then at once should have the sense of seeing imparted to him, in the midst of the clear light of the sun, discovering a world of visible objects. For though sight be more noble than any of the other external senses, yet this spiritual sense which has been spoken of, is infinitely more noble than that, or any other principle of discerning that a

man naturally has, and the object of this sense infinitely greater and more important.

PRES. EDWARDS.

I shall commend only some few instances, that you may see how little reason and inducement a soul conformed to the holy will of God, hath to seek its comforts and contents elsewhere. Faith corresponds to the truth of God, as it respects divine revelations. How pleasant is it to give up our understandings to the conduct of so safe a guide; to the view of so admirable things as he reveals! It corresponds to his goodness, as it respects its offers. How delectable is it to be filling an empty soul from the divine fulness! What pleasure attends the exercise of this faith towards the person of the Mediator, viewing him in all his glorious excellencies, receiving him in all his gracious communications by this eye and hand! How pleasant is it to exercise it in reference to another world! living by it in a daily prospect of eternity; in reference to this world, to live without care in a cheerful dependence on him that hath undertaken to care for us!

Repentance is that by which we become like the holy God; to whom our sin hath made us most unlike before. How sweet are kind relentings, penitential tears, and the return of the soul to its God, and to a right mind! And who can conceive the ravishing pleasures of love to God, wherein we not only imitate, but intimately unite with him, who is love itself! How pleasant to let our souls dissolve here, and flow into the ocean the element of love! Our fear corresponds to his excellent greatness; and is not (as it is a part of the new creature in us) a tormenting, servile passion, but a due respectfulness and observance of God; and there is no mean pleasure in that holy, awful seriousness unto which it composes and forms our spirits. Our humility, as it respects him, answers his high excellency; as it respects our own inferiors, his gracious condescension. How pleasant is it to fall before him! and how connatural and agreeable to a good spirit, to stoop low, upon any occasion, to do good! Sincerity is a most God-like excellency; an imitation of his truth, as grounded in his all-sufficiency; which sets him above the necessity or possibility of any advantage by collusion or deceit; and

corresponds to his omniscience and heart-searching eye. It heightens a man's spirit to a holy and generous boldness; makes him apprehend it beneath him to do an unworthy, dishonest action, that should need a palliation, or a concealment;* and gives him the continual pleasure of self-approbation to God, whom he chiefly studies and desires to please. Patience, a prime glory of the divine majesty, continues a man's possession of his own soul, his liberty, his dominion of himself. He is, if he can *suffer* nothing, a slave to his vilest and most sordid passions at home, his own base fear, and brutish anger, and effeminate grief, and to any man's lusts and humours besides, that he apprehends can do him hurt. It keeps a man's soul in a peaceful calm, delivers him from that most unnatural self-torment, defeats the impotent malice of his most implacable enemy, who fain would vex him, but cannot. Justice, the great attribute of the Judge of all the earth, as such, so far as the impression of it takes place among men, preserves the common peace of the world, and the private peace of each man in his own bosom, so that the former be not disturbed by doing of mutual injuries, nor the latter by the conscience of having done them. The brotherly love of fellow-Christians, the impression of that special love which God bears to them all, admits them into one another's bosoms, and to all the endearments and pleasures of a mutual communion. Love to enemies, the express image of our heavenly Father, by which we appear his children, begotten of him, overcomes evil by goodness, blunts the double edge of revenge, at least the sharper edge, (which is always towards the author of it,) secures ourselves from wounding impressions and resentments, turns keen anger into gentle pity, and substitutes mild pleasant forgiveness in the room of the much uncasier thoughts and study of retaliation. Mercifulness towards the distressed, as our Father in heaven is merciful, heaps blessing upon our souls, and evidences our title to what we are to live by, the divine mercy. A universal benignity and

propensity to do good to all, an imitation of the immense diffusive goodness of God, is but kindness to ourselves, rewards itself by that greater pleasure is in giving than in receiving, and associates us with God, (in the blessedness of this work, as well as in the disposition to it,) who exercises loving kindness in the earth, because he delighteth therein.

Here are some of the *μυήματα τῆς θείας ζωῆς*, or *the things wherein consists that our conformity to the divine nature and will, which is proper to our present state*. And now, who can estimate the blessedness of such a soul? Can, in a word, the state of that soul be unhappy, that is full of the Holy Ghost, full of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, those blessed fruits of that blessed Spirit? Blessedness is connaturalised unto this soul: every thing doth its part, and all conspire to make it happy. This soul is a temple, an habitation of holiness. Here dwells a deity in his glory. It is a paradise, a garden of God. Here he walks and converses daily, delighted with its fragrant fruitfulness. He that hath those things and aboundeth, is not barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus: he is the sun, and the knowledge of of him, the quickening beams that cherish and ripen these fruits. But the soul that lacketh these things is a desert, a habitation of devils. Here is stupid, disconsolate infidelity, inflexible obstinacy, and resolvedness for hell, hatred and contempt of the Sovereign Majesty; who yet, its secret misgiving thoughts tell it, will be too hard for it at last. Here is swollen pride and giddy vain-glory, disguised hypocrisy and pining envy, raging wrath and ravenous avarice, with what you can imagine besides, leading to misery and desolation.

REV. JOHN HOWE.

Our greatest Self-interest is to follow after Holiness.

As love to God, so a regular self-love will much help and further our obedience and duty. And then is self-love truly regular, when men love their own souls as God loves them. Now God's love to the souls of men is such, that though *He wills all men to be saved*, yet he wills that none

* As that noble Roman, whom his architect, about to build him a house, promised to contrive it free from all his neighbours' inspection; he replies, Nay, if thou have any art in thee, build my house so that all may see what I do,—*Vell. Pat. p. 82.*

shall be saved, *but through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*. And whilst we love ourselves, if we observe the same method and order, this self-love is always commendable and necessary. Desires after eternal happiness and salvation are natural to that soul that is truly conscious of its own immortality, and eternal unalterable state and condition; and when these desires are directed to future happiness through present holiness, then are they regular and become gracious. We are not so straitly limited by God's sovereignty over us, but while we fix one eye upon our work we may fix the other on our reward: God is not so strict in his prerogative over us, as to require service from us from what we have already received from him: he is not as a cruel lord and master to say, Obey me, though afterwards you perish; see to it that you love and glorify me, though I eternally punish you; though, considering that infinite distance we stand at from God, we could object nothing against the equity of his proceedings. No; but God hath so graciously twisted his glory and our duty together, that while we promote the one we do also promote the other, and while we work for God we do but work for ourselves. Now are there any that need to be persuaded to love themselves? Is it not the great and general sin, that all men love and seek themselves? And do not men, by becoming self-lovers, become self-destroyers? Yes, they do so; but it is because they seek themselves out of God's way, that therefore they lose themselves for ever. Religion and holiness are not such severe things, as to exclude self-love; nay, right self-love is that which is no where to be found separate from true grace. Ministers call upon men to exercise self-denial and self-abhorrence; and this the foolish world mistakes as if so be they exhorted them to divorce themselves from themselves, to lay aside all respect and consideration of self, and to offer violence to the most common principles of self-preservation. No; would to God we all sought ourselves more earnestly and constantly than we do, and that we all knew wherein our greatest interest and concernment did lie: then should we not leave our great work undone, nor gratify the sloth of our corrupt humours, and the sinful propensions of our carnal part; nor should we think what we do for sin and

Satan, we do for ourselves; no, all this is to hate ourselves. And wicked men at the last day shall know, they have been their own most bitter and most implacable enemies, that they would not be content with any thing less than their own eternal ruin. A true Christian is the only selfish man in the world; all others, they are not self-lovers but self-destroyers. What shall I say more than this? The Apostle asks, *Did ever any man hate his own flesh?* Did ever any man delight to gash and burn, to wrack and torture himself? Truly I may ask the quite contrary. Do almost any love their own spirits, their spiritual part, their souls? This they wound and gash by many a bloody sin; this they burn and sear by hardness and impenitency; this they go about to torture and torment in hell for ever. Oh therefore be persuaded at length to take pity on yourselves, considering you are but destroying, while you think you are embracing of yourselves; and that will be found but self-murder at last, which you now call self-love.

BR. HOPKINS.

The Joy and Consolation of Religion.

THE peace which a religious soul is possessed of, is such a *peace as passeth all understanding*: the joy that it meets with in the ways of holiness, is *unspeakable and full of glory*. The delights and sweetnesses that accompany a religious life are of a purer and more excellent nature than the pleasures of worldly men. The spirit of a good man is a more pure and refined thing than to delight itself in the thick mire of earthly and sensual pleasures, in which carnal men roll and tumble themselves with so much greediness: *Non admittit ad volatum accipitrem suum in terra pulverulenta*, as the Arabic proverb hath it. It speaks the degeneration of any soul whatsoever, that it should desire to incorporate itself with any of the gross, dreggy, sensual delights here below. But a soul purified by religion from all earthly dregs, delights to mingle itself only with things that are most divine and spiritual. There is nothing that can beget any pleasure or sweetness, but in some harmonical faculty which hath some kindred and acquaintance with it. As it is in the senses, so in every other faculty, there is such a natural kind of science as whereby it can

single out its own proper object from every thing else, and is better able to define it to itself than the exactest artist in the world can; and when once it hath found it out, it presently feels itself so perfectly fitted and matched by it, that it dissolves into secret joy and pleasure in the entertainment of it. True delight and joy is begotten by the conjunction of some discerning faculty with its proper object. The proper objects for a mind and spirit are divine and immaterial things, with which it hath the greatest affinity, and therefore triumphs most in its converse with them; as it is well observed by Seneca,* *Hoc habet argumentum divinitatis suæ, quòd illum divina delectant; nec ut alienis interest, sed ut suis*: and when it converseth most with these high and noble objects, it behaves itself most gracefully, and lives most becoming itself; and it lives also most deliciously, nor can it any where else be better provided for, or indeed fare so well. A good man disdains to be beholden to the wit, or art, or industry of any creature to find him out, and bring him in a constant revenue and maintenance for his joy and pleasure: the language of his heart is that of the Psalmist, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me*, Psal. iv. 6. Religion always carries a sufficient provision of joy and sweetness along with it to maintain itself withal: *All the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. iii. 17. Religion is no sullen stoicism or oppressing melancholy, it is no intrahing tyranny exercised over those noble and vivacious affections of love and delight, as those men that were never acquainted with the life of it may imagine; but is full of a vigorous and masculine delight and joy, and such as advanceth and ennobles the soul, and does not weaken or dispirit the life and power of it, as sensual and earthly joys do, when the soul, unacquainted with religion, is enforced to give entertainment to these gross and earthly things, for the want of enjoyment of some better good. The spirit of a good man may justly behave itself with a noble disdain to all terrene pleasures, because it knows where to mend its fare; it is the same almighty and eternal goodness which is the happiness of God and of all good men. The truly religious soul affects nothing primarily and

fundamentally but God himself; his contentment, even in the midst of his worldly employments, is in the sun of the divine favour that shines upon him: this is as the manna that lies upon the top of all outward blessings, which his spirit gathers up and feeds upon with delight. Religion consists not in a toilsome drudgery about some bodily exercises and external performances; nor is it only the spending of ourselves in such attendances upon God and services to him as are only accommodated to this life, though every employment for God is both amiable and honourable: but there is something of our religion that interests us in a present possession of that *joy which is unspeakable and glorious*; which leads us into the porch of heaven, and to the confines of eternity. It sometimes carries up the soul into a mount of transfiguration, or to the top of Pisgah, where it may take a prospect of the promised land; and gives it a map or scheme of its future inheritance: it gives it sometimes some anticipations of blessedness, some foretastes of those joys, those rivers of pleasure which run at God's right hand for evermore. . .

As there would need nothing else to deter and affright men from sin but its own ugliness and deformity, were it presented to a naked view and seen as it is; so nothing would more effectually commend religion to the minds of men, than the displaying and unfolding the excellencies of its nature, than the true native beauty and inward lustre of religion itself: οὐθ' ἔσπερος, οὐθ' ἑῷος οὐτῶ θανμαστός: neither the evening nor the morning star could so sensibly commend themselves to our bodily eyes, and delight them with their shining beauties, as true religion, which is an undefiled beam of the uncreated light, would to a mind capable of conversing with it. Religion, which is the true wisdom, is, as the author of the book of Wisdom speaks of wisdom, *a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty, the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness: she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars; being compared with the light, she is found before it*, Wisd. vii. 25. &c.

Religion is no such austere, sour, and rigid thing, as to affright men away from it: no, but those that are acquainted with the power of it, find it to be altogether

* In Præfat. ad Lib. I. Nat. Quest.

sweet and amiable. A holy soul sees so much of the glory of religion in the lively impressions which it bears upon itself, as both woos and wins it. We may truly say concerning religion to such souls, as St. Paul spake to the Corinthians:—Needs it any epistles of commendation to you? Needs it any thing to court your affections? *Ye are indeed its epistle, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God,* 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3.

Religion is not like the prophet's roll, sweet as honey, when it was in his mouth, but as bitter as gall in his belly. Religion is no sullen Stoicism, no sour Pharisaism; it does not consist in a few melancholy passions, in some dejected looks or depressions of mind: but it consists in freedom, love, peace, life, and power; the more it comes to be digested into our lives the more sweet and lovely we shall find it to be. Those spots and wrinkles which corrupt minds think they see in the face of religion, are indeed no where else but in their own deformed and mis-shapen apprehensions. It is no wonder when a defiled fancy comes to be the glass, if you have an unlovely reflection. Let us therefore labour to purge our own souls from all worldly pollutions; let us breathe after the aid and assistance of the Divine Spirit, that it may irradiate and enlighten our minds, that we may be able to see divine things in a divine light: let us endeavour to live more in a real practice of those rules of religious and holy living, commended to us by our ever-blessed Lord and Saviour: so we shall know religion better, and knowing it, love it, and loving it, be still more and more ambitiously pursuing after it, till we come to a full attainment of it, and therein of our own perfection and everlasting bliss. REV. J. SMITH.

The only placid and sound tranquillity, the only solid, firm, and perpetual security, is to be delivered from the tempests of this restless scene, to be stationed in the port of salvation; to lift up the eyes from earth to heaven, and to be admitted into the favour of the Lord. Such a man approaches, in his thoughts, near to his God, and justly glories, that whatever others deem sublime and great in human affairs, is absolutely beneath his notice. He, who is greater than the world, can desire nothing, can want nothing from the world. What an unshaken protection, what a

truly divine shelter, fraught with eternal good, it must be, to be loosed from the snares of an entangling world, to be purged from earthly dregs, and to be wafted into the light of immortal day! When we see what the insidious rage of a destructive enemy was plotting against us, certainly we must be the more compelled to love what we shall be, because we have now learned both to know and to condemn what we were. Nor is there, for this end, any need of price, of canvassing, or of manual labour. This complete dignity, or power of man, is not to be acquired by elaborate efforts. The gift of God is gratuitous and easy. As the sun shines freely, as the fountain rises, as the rain bedews, so the Celestial Spirit infuses himself. The soul looks up to heaven, and becomes conscious of its Author. It then begins actually to be what it believes itself to be. It is higher than the firmament, and sublimer than all earthly power. Only do you, whom the heavenly warfare hath marked for divine service, preserve untainted and sober your Christian course, by the virtues of religion. Let prayer or reading be your assiduous employment. Sometimes speak with God, at other times hear him speak to you. Let him instruct you by his precepts; let him regulate you. Whom he hath made rich, none shall make poor. There can be no penury with him whose heart has once been enriched with celestial bounty. Roofs arched with gold, and houses inlaid with marble, will be vile in your eyes, when you know that your own minds ought rather to be cultivated and adorned; that this house is more valuable, which the Lord has chosen to be his temple, in which the Holy Ghost has begun to dwell. Let us adorn this house with the paintings of innocence, let us illuminate it with the light of righteousness. This will never fall into ruin through the decays of age. Its ornaments shall never fade. Whatever is not genuine is precarious, and affords to the possessor no sure foundation. This remains in its culture perpetually vivid; in honour and in splendour, spotless and eternal. It can neither be abolished nor extinguished. Is it then capable of no alteration? Yes, it will receive a rich improvement at the resurrection of the body. CYPRIAN.

Believe me, I speak it deliberately and with full conviction, I have enjoyed

many of the comforts of life, none of which I wish to esteem lightly; often have I been charmed with the beauties of nature, and refreshed with her bountiful gifts: I have spent many an hour in sweet meditation, and in reading the most valuable productions of the wisest men: I have often been delighted with the conversation of ingenious, sensible, and exalted characters: my eyes have been powerfully attracted by the finest productions of human art, and my ears by enchanting melodies: I have found pleasure when calling into activity the powers of my own mind; when residing in my own native land, or travelling through foreign parts; when surrounded by large and splendid companies—still more, when moving in the small endearing circle of my own family: yet, to speak the truth before God, who is my Judge, I must confess I know not any joy that is so dear to me, that so fully satisfies the inmost desires of my mind, that so enlivens, refines, and elevates my whole nature, as that which I derive from religion, from faith in God; as one who not only is the Parent of men, but has condescended, as a brother, to clothe himself with our nature. Nothing affords me greater delight than a solid hope that I partake of his favours, and rely on his never-failing support and protection. . . . He, who has been so often my hope, my refuge, my confidence, when I stood upon the brink of an abyss where I could not move one step forward; He, who in answer to my prayer, has helped me when every prospect of help vanished; that God who has safely conducted me, not merely through flowery paths, but likewise across precipices and burning sands; may this God be thy God, thy refuge, thy comfort, as he has been mine! Let the world laugh me to scorn, I rejoice in the God of my salvation! Let ignorance and infidelity mock, I enjoy that which the world cannot enjoy; I receive that which infidelity will never receive! I say, with St. Paul, *is he the God of the Jews only?* ‘The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob only?’ By no means!—Assuredly He is my God also. I say with Luther, ‘If I have the faith of Abraham, I am Abraham.’

LAVATER.

All the Christian's Joy and Consolation in Religion rest on his dependence on Christ.

LET us act in a constant dependence upon Jesus Christ. Religion would be

much more pleasant, if we did but cleave more closely to Christ in it, and do all in his name. The more precious Christ is to us, the more pleasant will every part of our work be; and therefore believing in Christ is often expressed by our rejoicing in him. We may rejoice in God, through Christ, as the Mediator between us and God; may rejoice in our communion with God, when it is kept up through Christ; may rejoice in hope of eternal life, when we see this life in the Son. *He that hath the Son of God, has life*, that is, he has comfort.

There is that in Christ, and in his undertaking and performances for us, which is sufficient to satisfy all our doubts, to silence all our fears, and to balance all our sorrows. He was appointed to be *the Consolation of Israel*, and he will be so to us, when we have learnt not to look for that in ourselves, which is to be had in him only, and to make use of his mediation in every thing wherein we have to do with God. When we rejoice in the righteousness of Christ, and in his grace and strength; when we rejoice in his satisfaction and intercession, in his dominion and universal agency and influence, and in the progress of his Gospel, and the conversion of souls to him, and please ourselves with prospects of his second coming, we have then a joy, not only which no man takes from us, but which will increase more and more: and of the *increase of Christ's government*, and therefore of that peace, *there shall be no end*. Our songs of joy are then most pleasant, when the burden of them is, *None but Christ, none but Christ*. . . .

Come then, my soul, come thou and all thy concerns into this ark, and there thou shalt be safe when the deluge comes. Flee to this city of refuge, and in it thou shalt be secured from the avenger of blood. Quit all other shelters, for every thing but Christ is a refuge of lies, which the hail will sweep away. There is not salvation in any other but in him: trust him for it therefore, and depend upon him only. Here I cast anchor, here I rest my soul, *it is Christ that died, yea, rather, is risen again*, and is and will be the *Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him*. To him I entirely give up myself—to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him, and in him I have a full satisfaction. I will draw near to God for mercy and grace, in

a dependence upon him as my righteousness. I will go forth, and go on in the way of my duty, in a dependence upon him as my strength. I will shortly venture into the invisible, unchangeable world, in a dependence upon him as the Captain of my salvation, who is able to bring many sons to glory, and as willing as he is able.

Lord, I believe ; help thou my unbelief.

Having thus committed thyself, my soul, to the Lord Jesus, comfort thyself in him ; please thyself with the thought of having disposed of thyself so well, and of having lodged the great concern of thy salvation in so good a hand ; now *return to thy rest, O my soul*, and be easy. Having made sure of thy interest in Christ, live in a continual dependence upon him ; and being satisfied of his love, be satisfied with it : thou hast enough, and needest no more.

MATT. HENRY.

Christ the only true Riches.

IF I have Jesus, I have all my soul can want. He can bless me, and make me truly happy ; and, clothed with his righteousness, I shall be honourable and beloved of God : He can secure and defend me from every evil, make all things in friendship with me, and fully satisfy the desires of an immortal soul, without any deficiency or failure through time and through all eternity. It is only the ignorance and the carnality of man that prevent his valuing the Lord Jesus Christ, his grace, and his blessings ; for while sin is in the heart, while the mind in its carnal state is formed to relish only earthly things and sensual objects, there can be no apprehension of the nature and excellency of spiritual things, and consequently no value for the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the glory of the spiritual world. It is therefore the great aim of the enemy of souls to engage the attention of the natural man to the things of time, and to the various objects of sense which surround him, and to lead him to estimate them so highly, and, alas ! so falsely, as to place all his happiness in the enjoyment of them. Hence amongst these things which are lost—i. e. among the perishing things of earth—the god of this world blinds the eyes of them that believe not, *lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them*, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Thus

deceived as to their true state, ignorant of their real wants, and mistaken as to their true enjoyment, the world at large are careless of Christ and unconcerned as to the possession of him and his salvation. But, while the sensual world, deluded with imaginary bliss, pity and despise those who value Christ, they are themselves truly the objects of pity, since they are ignorant of the only Saviour and only blessing of the human race. The humble believer compassionates the miserable fallacy that deceives their mind, and confirms them in errors so fatal to the happiness of an immortal soul, and so dangerous to their eternal welfare ; and, with the kindness and philanthropy which conforms him to his benevolent Master, earnestly supplicates the Spirit of the Lord to enlighten their understanding, and lead them to the knowledge of that only good thing for the sons of men. The richest man on earth soon finds that there are several things which all his wealth cannot procure, and without which he has no power of enjoyment. It can give him neither health of body nor peace of mind, nor restore them when they are declining. It fails to help in matters of the greatest importance, and especially at the time when help is most needed. Go, ask through all the world, amidst the various things which the stores of gold can procure, where is the place of happiness ? And each will answer for itself, *It is not in me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof, &c.*, Job xxviii. 12—28. But what gold cannot purchase, the Lord Jesus Christ can bestow ; even that without which we must be poor indeed. Riches can procure food and raiment, and the luxuries of each. They can supply all bodily conveniences and comforts. They can secure our temporal possessions, and adorn our temporary habitations. They can do still more ; they can, in ordinary cases, conciliate the favour, the esteem, and the respect of men ; and, by rewarding, can retain their homage and their services to administer to our wants and our gratifications. But in the most important seasons of trial, affliction, or necessity, they can afford no aid, no support, no consolation. But here is the peculiar excellency of the Friend of sinners, and of the blessings which he bestows : they are suited to the seasons of trial, to support, and to carry through all ; yea, to

turn all into blessings. The peculiar benefits which he bestows are of a nature suited to the power and the duration of an immortal spirit, being spiritual and eternal. He can give me the pardon of all my sins, peace with God through the justification and acceptance of my person, the consciousness of Divine love and favour, the joys and consolation of his Spirit, the calm of soul in the season of trial and affliction, the hope of everlasting glory that can sustain even in the hour of nature's dissolution, and the satisfactory assurance of an unalienable title to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. These are true riches which never fade and never fail; riches which can never lose their value, and of which the true believer shall never lose the enjoyment. In comparison with these, how do all earthly things, in their highest glories, fade and vanish away before the eye of faith? Hence we see that the poor and humble believer is often happier than the richest of the sons of men; for he has joys and pleasures, and an unfailing source for their supply, which the world knows nothing of; a source undefiled with sin, which supplies him with gratifications free from guilty fears and gloomy apprehensions, and which do not terminate with the present system of things, but are suited to that glorious system which shall be the felicity of eternal ages, into which he is speedily advancing, and where they shall be perfectly matured. *The first blessing of pardoning mercy and justifying righteousness, which the Lord Jesus Christ bestows, opens the way to all besides, Rom. v. 1, &c. So that all things are theirs who can say Christ is theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 21.* Sense values earthly blessings, because they are present, and suited to the gratification of the body; the instrument through which alone, in the present state, the immortal soul can act or enjoy. But spiritual blessings, though unseen, are infinitely preferable in just estimation; and when faith beholds them (and it is the great work of the believer to live by faith, and not by sense), they appear so to the believing mind. But these are all treasured up in Christ Jesus, that they may be given to the believing sinner, and are secured to the enjoyment of faith, by the precious and never-failing promises of his word. Whatever, then, we may be destitute of, let us seek to have an interest in Christ,

nor ever be satisfied without the knowledge of its attainment. The Apostle surely was not mistaken in the sentiment which he entertained of the incomparable value of the Saviour, when he accounted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; nor was he unwise in his determination when he resolved to suffer the loss of all things, that he might win Christ, and be found in him.

REV. W. GOODE.

Nothing but Christ can satisfy the restless desires of Man.

SUCH is the present state of the world, that men perceive a need of something, which, if they really knew the situation in which they are placed, they would find to be—the Lord Jesus. Man feels his wants: he is,—he must be,—a needy, because he is a dependent, creature. But when he looks around him, though at first elevated with hope, and big with expectations, he finds nothing here suited to his whole nature. Wherever he fixes his confidence, he is soon convinced it is not what he expected it to be. All that offers itself for his enjoyment soon discovers its vanity and emptiness, and fails to afford him the satisfaction he looked for in it. Still there is a something which he needs. And, when he has run all the circle of earthly pleasures, or attained all that earth can give, there is yet that something wanting. The general experience of mankind concurs with that of the royal Preacher, who, in possession of more than any one ever attained beside of wisdom or prosperity, pronounced the sum of all, *vanity and vexation of spirit.*

Hence, while feeling the vacuity which remains, even when in possession of all the good which earth can yield, man must actually desire and long for something beyond, which can only be found in Christ. The grand pursuit of man is happiness. In whatever way he wanders, whatever are his pursuits or occupations, however mistaken in the means, this is his object and his end. But does he acquire it? Alas! what frequent, what continual disappointment! To obtain this he must have objects to enjoy, in which all his wishes can meet, all his powers can be exercised, all his desires can centre, and all his passions (such indeed as he received them from the hand of his Creator, and not as distorted by sin) can find com-

plete satisfaction. But these are not to be found on earth. To obtain any one of those important ends, how many schemes does he devise! how many plans does he execute! He turns from one pursuit to another, changes again, and shifts the scene, and still finds himself no nearer the great object of man's desire. Hence arises the restlessness of human nature. Dissatisfied with his present situation and the present state of things, man is anxious for something new; waiting continually for some change that may, as he supposes, render his situation better, promote his happiness, or supply that emptiness in his soul which all his present possessions have still left behind. But, while he feels the insufficiency of earth, his depravity blinds him to his true state and his real interest. He knows not, and is unwilling to know, where the fault lies: he is pleased with the chain of his passions which binds him to earth, and, filled with illusive dreams of happiness, which ever flies from him as he attempts to embrace it, he hopes to remedy his misery by rushing further into that which is the real cause of it. He has a secret conviction that he is not where, and what, he ought to be; and that every thing around him is not that to him for which it was designed: but, alas! he knows not that all this arises from his distance from God; that it is the necessary consequence of his being found a sinner against his Creator; that sin has fixed a dissatisfaction in all earthly enjoyments, embittered them with guilty fear, and clouded them with gloomy suspicions; that it has stamped an emptiness on all earthly glory; and that man, having wandered from the true source of perfection and bliss, only rests on other things to be disappointed. Hence, the uncertainty of earth, even in its best estate. Man must have a higher good, or be eternally miserable. He must be restored to the Divine favour, and rest again in the love and enjoyment of his God, or for ever wander amidst hopeless vanities. But for these things where shall he look? Oh, behold, thou who art guilty and miserable, thy help, thy refuge! It is placed in Jesus the friend of sinners! He is the tree which can sweeten the bitter waters of life (see Exod. xv. 23—26), and render them pleasant and salutary. He is the refuge where all the desires of men may

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safely rest, nor fear insufficiency or disappointment. . . .

Why so infatuated, thou perishing sinner, as to neglect this glorious Saviour, when all his majesty and mercy are so repeatedly displayed before thee, and thyself repeatedly solicited to become the happy partaker of his benefits? Why is the sacred word which conveys the descriptions of his excellencies so totally disregarded? Why are its convincing evidences, so graciously afforded by a God of mercy, so partially examined, so unwillingly admitted, or heedlessly passed by? Why that secret or allowed unbelief, in opposition to the clearest discoveries of truth? Why dost thou continue to deceive thyself with the hopes of empty vanities; and, when experience teaches thee the impossibility of finding happiness on earth, dost thou still renew the vain pursuit, incredulous to the testimony of Divine truth, though so correspondent with the facts which press on thy observation all around thee? How unreasonable, at least, not to try the experiment, to find that happiness in Jesus which experience teaches thee is not to be found on earth! How absurd to trifle when eternity is depending! If it is neglected till the great decisive day, you will then, alas! find it too late;—too late you will feel the necessary conviction, when lost, lost eternally, lost beyond the remedy which once the Gospel offered; though then fully convinced of that which you could not believe on the testimony of God, that to have an interest in Christ can alone secure and bless an immortal soul. O Spirit of Jesus, let thy grace enlighten the mind, and incline the heart, that, convinced in time, while the blessings of salvation are before them, men may seek and find in that adorable Redeemer that which is the light and life and glory of an immortal soul.

REV. W. GOODE.

We must learn to look for Happiness in God alone.

CERTAINLY the greatest, the noblest pleasure of intelligent creatures must result from their acquaintance with the blessed God, and with their own rational and immortal souls. And oh, how divinely pleasant and entertaining is it to look into our own souls, when we can find all our powers and passions united and engaged

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in pursuit after God, our whole souls longing and passionately breathing after a conformity to him, and the full enjoyment of him! Verily, no hours pass away with so much divine pleasure, as those that are spent in communing with God and our own hearts. How sweet is a spirit of devotion, of seriousness and solemnity; a spirit of Gospel simplicity, love, and tenderness! Oh how desirable and profitable is a spirit of holy watchfulness, and godly jealousy over ourselves; when our souls are afraid of nothing so much as that we shall grieve and offend the blessed God, whom at such times we apprehend, or at least hope, to be a father and friend; whom we then love and long to please, rather than to be happy ourselves, or at least we delight to derive our happiness from pleasing and glorifying him. Surely this is a pious temper, worthy of the highest ambition and closest pursuit of intelligent creatures. Oh how vastly superior is the pleasure, peace, and satisfaction derived from these divine frames, to that which we sometimes seek in things impertinent and trifling! Bitter experience teaches us that *in the midst of such laughter the heart is sorrowful*, and there is no true satisfaction but in God. But, alas, how shall we obtain and preserve this spirit of religion and devotion? Let us follow the Apostle's direction, Phil. ii. 12, and labour upon the encouragement he there mentions, ver. 13, for it is God only can afford us this favour; and he will be sought to, and it is fit we should wait upon him for so rich a mercy. May the God of all grace afford us the influences of his Holy Spirit, and help us, that we may from our hearts esteem it our greatest liberty and happiness, that *whether we live, we may live to the Lord, or whether we die, we may die to the Lord*; that in life and death we may be his.

BRAINERD.

It requires long and severe conflicts to subdue the earthly and selfish nature, and turn all the desire of the soul to God. He that trusts to his own wisdom and strength, is easily seduced to seek repose in human consolations: but he that truly loves Christ, and depends only upon his redeeming power within him, as the principle of holiness and truth, turns not aside to such vain comforts, nor, indeed, seeks after any of the delights of sense; but rather chooses the severe exercises of self-denial, and, for

the sake of Christ, to endure the most painful labours.

When, therefore, God bestows upon thee the consolations of the Spirit, receive them with all thankfulness: but remember, they are his gift, not thy desert; and instead of being elate, careless, and presuming, be more humble, more watchful and devout in all thy conduct: for the hour of light and peace will soon pass away, and darkness and temptation will succeed. Yet when this awful change intervenes, do not immediately despair, but with humility and patience wait for the return of the heavenly visitation; for God, who is infinite in goodness as well as in power, is both able and willing to renew the bounties of his grace in more abundant measures.

This vicissitude of day and night in the spiritual life, is neither new nor unexpected to those that are acquainted with the ways of God; for the ancient prophets and most eminent saints have all experienced an alternative of visitation and desertion. As an instance of this, the royal Prophet thus describes his own case, *When I was in prosperity*, says he, and my heart was filled with the treasures of grace, *I said, I shall never be moved*. But these treasures being soon taken away, and feeling in himself the poverty of fallen nature, he adds, *Thou didst turn thy face from me, and I was troubled*. Yet in this disconsolate state he does not despair; but with more ardour raises his desire and prayer to God: *Unto thee, O Lord, will I cry, and I will make my supplication unto my God*. He then testifies that his prayer is accepted, and his prosperous state restored: *The Lord hath heard me, and hath had mercy upon me: the Lord is become my helper*. And to shew how this mercy and help were manifested, he adds: *Thou hast turned my mourning into joy, and hast compassed me about with gladness*. And if this interchange of light and darkness, joy and sorrow, was the common state of the greatest saints; surely such poor and infirm creatures as we are, ought not to despair, when we are sometimes elevated by fervour, and sometimes depressed by coldness; for the Holy Spirit cometh and goeth, *according to the good pleasure of his will*: and upon this principle the blessed Job saith, *Thou visitest man in the morning, and of a sudden thou provest him*.

In what, therefore, can I hope, or where

ought I to place my confidence, but in infinite goodness, and the life, light, and peace of the Divine Spirit? For whether the conversation of holy men, the endearing kindness of faithful friends, the melody of music in psalms and hymns, the entertainment of ingenious books, nay, the instructions of the oracles of God—whether any or all of these advantages are present, what do they all avail, what joy can they dispense, when the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from my soul, and I am left to the poverty and wretchedness of my fallen self? In such a state, no remedy remains but meek and humble patience, and the total surrender of my will to the blessed will of God. THOMAS A KEMPIS.

Happiness resulting from eyeing God in all things.

To eye God in all our comforts, and observe the smiling aspects of his face, when he dispenses them to us; to eye him in all our afflictions, and consider the paternal wisdom that instructs us in them; how would this increase our mercies, and mitigate our troubles? To eye him in all his creatures, and observe the various prints of the Creator's glory stamped upon them; with how lively a lustre would it clothe the world, and make every thing look with a pleasant face! What a heaven were it to look upon God, as filling all in all! and how sweetly would it, ere-while, raise our souls into some such sweet seraphic strains, as, *Holy, holy, holy,—the whole earth is full of his glory*, Isa. vi. 2, 3. To eye him in his providences, and consider how all events are, with infinite wisdom, disposed into an apt subserviency to his holy will and ends:—what difficulties would hence be solved! what seeming inconsistencies reconciled! and how much would it contribute to the ease and quiet of our minds! To eye him in his Christ, the express image of his person, the brightness of his glory; and in the Christian economy, the Gospel revelation and ordinances, through which he manifests himself: to behold him in the posture wherein he saves souls, clad with the garments of salvation, girt with power, and apparelled with love, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save: to view him addressing himself to allure and win to him the hearts of sinners, when

he discovers himself in Christ, upon that reconciling design, makes grace that brings salvation appear, teaching to deny ungodliness, &c.: to behold him entering into human flesh, pitching his tabernacle among men, hanging out his ensigns of peace, laying his trains, spreading his net, the cords of a man, the bands of love: to see him in his Christ, ascending the cross, lifted up to draw all men to him; and consider that mighty love of justice and of souls, both so eminently conspicuous in that stupendous sacrifice; here to fix our eyes looking to Jesus, and behold in him, him whom we have pierced: to see his power and glory, as they were wont to be seen in his sanctuaries; to observe him in the solemnities of his worship, and the graceful postures wherein he holds communion with his saints, when he seats himself amidst them on the throne of grace, receives their addresses, dispenses the tokens and pledges of his love: into what transports might these visions put us every day!

Let us then stir up our drowsy souls, open our heavy eyes, and turn them upon God, inure and habituate them to a constant view of his (yet veiled) face, that we may not see him only by casual glances, but as those that seek his face, and make it our business to gain a thorough knowledge of him. But let us remember, that all our present visions of God must aim at a further conformity to him: they must design imitation, not the satisfying of curiosity; our looking must not therefore be an inquisitive, busy prying into the unrevealed things of God. Carefully abstain from such over-bold presumptuous looks. But remember, we are to eye God as our pattern. Wherein he is to be so, he hath plainly enough revealed and proposed himself to us. And consider, this is the pattern, both to which we ought, and to which we shall be conformed, if we make it our business; so will sense of duty and hope of success concur to fix our eye and keep it steady. Especially, let us endeavour to manage and guide our eye aright, in beholding him, that our sight of him may most effectually subserve this design of being like him: and herein nothing will be more conducive, than that our looks be qualified with reverence, and love. REV. J. HOWE.

SECTION IV.—ON THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

The Character of a Christian.

It is true, that worldly eyes can see no difference betwixt a Christian and another man; the outside of both is made of one clay, and cast in one mould; both are inspired with one common breath: outward events distinguish them not; those God never made for evidences of love or hatred. So the senses can perceive no difference betwixt the reasonable soul, and that which informs the beast; yet the soul knows there is much more than betwixt their bodies. The same holds in this: Faith sees more inward difference than the eye sees outward resemblance. This point is not more high than material: which that it may appear, let me shew what it is to be a Christian: you that have felt it, can second me with your experience; and supply the defects of my discourse. He is the living temple of the living God, where the Deity is both resident and worshipped. The highest thing in a man is his own spirit; but in a Christian the Spirit of God, which is the God of spirits. No grace is wanting in him; and those which there are, want not stirring up. Both his heart and his hands are clean: all his outward purity flows *from within*; neither doth he frame his soul to counterfeit good actions; but out of his holy disposition commands and produces them in the light of God. Let us begin with his beginning, and fetch the Christian out of this nature, as another Abraham from his Chaldea; while the worldling lives, and dies, in nature, out of God. The true convert therefore, after his wild and secure courses, puts himself (through the motions of God's Spirit) to school unto the law; there he learns what he should have done, what he could not do, what he hath done, what he hath deserved. These lessons cost him many a stripe, and many a tear, and not more grief than terror: for this sharp master makes him feel what sin is, and what hell is, and, in regard of both, what himself is. When he hath well smarted under the whip of this severe usher, and is made vile enough in himself, then is he led up into the higher school of Christ, and there taught the comfortable lessons of grace; there he learns what belongs to a Saviour, what

one he is, what he hath done, and for whom; how he became ours, we his: and now finding himself in a true state of danger, of humility, of need, of desire, of fitness for Christ, he brings home to himself all that he learns; and what he knows, he applies. His former tutor he feared, this he loveth: that shewed him his wounds, yea, made them; this binds and heals them: that killed him; this shews him life, and leads him to it. Now at once he hates himself, defies Satan, trusts to Christ, makes account both of pardon and glory. This is his most precious faith, whereby he appropriates, yea ingrosses Christ Jesus to himself: whence he is justified from his sins, purified from his corruptions, established in his resolutions, comforted in his doubts, defended against temptations, overcomes all his enemies. Which virtue, as it is most employed, and most opposed, so carries the most care from the Christian heart, that it be sound, lively, growing: sound, not rotten, not hollow, not presumptuous: sound in the act; not superficial conceit, but a true, deep, and sensible apprehension: an apprehension, not of the brain, but of the heart; and of the heart, not approving, or assenting, but trusting and reposing. Sound in the object, none but Christ: he knows, that no friendship in heaven can do him good, without this: the angels cannot; God will not: *Ye believe in the Father, believe also in me.*

Lively; for it cannot give life, unless it give life: the faith that is not faithful, is dead: the fruits of faith are good works; whether inward, within the roof of the heart, as love, awe, sorrow, piety, zeal, joy, and the rest; or outward towards God, or our brethren: obedience and service to the one; to the other relief and beneficence:—these he bears in his time; sometimes all, but always some.

Growing: true faith cannot stand still; but as it is fruitful in works, so it increaseth in degrees: from a little seed it proves a large plant, reaching from earth to heaven, and from one heaven to another: every shower and every sun adds something to it. Neither is this grace ever solitary, but always attended royally: for he that believes what a Saviour he

hath, cannot but love him; and he that loves him, cannot but hate whatsoever may displease him; cannot but rejoice in him, and hope to enjoy him, and desire to enjoy his hope, and condemn all those vanities which he once desired and enjoyed. His mind now scorneth to grovel upon earth, but soareth up to the things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God; and after it hath seen what is done in heaven, looks strangely upon all worldly things. He dare trust his faith above his reason and sense, and hath learned to wean his appetite from craving much. He stands in awe of his own conscience, and dare no more offend it, than not displease himself. He fears not his enemies, yet neglects them not; equally avoiding security, and timorousness. He sees him that is invisible; and walks with him awfully, yet familiarly. He knows what he is born to, and therefore digests the miseries of his wardship, with patience: he finds more comfort in his afflictions, than any worldling in pleasures. And as he hath these graces to comfort him within, so hath he the angels to attend him without; spirits better than his own; more powerful, more glorious. These bear him in their arms, wake by his bed, keep his soul while he hath it, and receive it when it leaves him. These are some present differences: the greatest are future; which could not be so great, if themselves were not witness; no less than betwixt heaven and hell, torment and glory, an incorruptible crown, and fire unquenchable. Whether infidels believe these things or no, we know them, so shall they, but too late. What remains but that we applaud ourselves in this happiness, and walk on cheerily in this heavenly profession? acknowledging that God could not do more for us, and that we cannot do enough for him. Let others boast of ancient and noble houses, large patrimonies, or dowries, honourable commands; others of famous names, high and envied honours; or the favours of the greatest; others of valour or beauty, or some perhaps of eminent learning and wit; it shall be our pride that we are Christians.

BP. HALL.

If one were to draw the portraiture of a Christian, this probably would come near to his description:—He is one who, in doctrine, believes that the three persons in Jehovah are equally engaged in the ac-

complishment of his salvation; that the love of Father, Son, and Spirit, is but one love, directed to the three objects of their respective offices for him,—namely, creation, redemption, and regeneration, terminating in his eternal glorification; that he was chosen freely to this mercy, when it was lost by Adam to his nature; that he is freely called by the effectual application of divine power; that he is justified, only, and entirely, and at once, by the obedience of Jehovah, in human flesh, to that perfect law, which man was created to obey, but had broken; that he is sanctified in Jesus Christ through the Spirit; and by him shall persevere to the end, and be everlastingly saved.—The Christian is one who, in experience, looks into himself only for humiliation, and out of himself to God in Christ for all his happiness. He perceives, and often very wofully, that he has not the power of thinking, saying, or doing, one good thing; and that, however specious many moral acts may appear to the world, there is nothing intrinsically holy, but what is brought into him, and maintained in him, by the agency of the Holy One. Body, soul, and spirit, therefore, he meekly surrenders to his God, for time and for eternity. He distrusts his own wisdom and will, in all cases, from a just persuasion, that what is perverse in its own nature can only lead him astray. His whole security from falling, he founds upon his God; and, accordingly, he flies to him in all his temptations and distresses, great or small. He feels himself a poor, weak creature, that cannot stand a moment, and is, therefore, never easy, but when he leans upon his Beloved. He is well acquainted with this truth, uttered by a good man, that ‘with God, the most of mosts (in opposition to himself) is less than nothing; but without him, the least of leasts is too great a burden.’—Fleming’s Script. Truth, p. 248. And he hath that joy and peace in his Saviour, which he knows the world can neither give nor take away from him. Advert to his manners and conversation. He attends the ordinances of the Gospel, because in them he finds refreshment and strength to his soul. He hears the word with solemnity, comes to hear it with seriousness, and departs with gravity: not glad, when service is performed, to commence busybody in other men’s matters—1 Pet. iv. 15.—or to enter into the

frothy discourse of idle tongues. Like Mary he wishes to treasure up the Gospel in his heart, without evaporating its sweet savour by the impertinence and dissipation of worldly things. Collected and retired in himself, he aims to be inoffensive to others. Without parade he is religious, and serious without either gloom or severity. Never wishing to be forward in disputes, he is ever desirous of supporting the truths of God, in a way that may please God. He seeks not to obtrude upon or assume over others; but, with modest cheerfulness, wishes to elevate religion in the eyes of men; bearing with *their* infirmities, from the deepest conviction of *his own*. Above all things, he delights in the company of Him, who speaks as none other can speak, and when he obtains this happiness, (to use an old paradox,) 'is never less alone, than when he is alone.' He is never satisfied 'to part with his private duty, till he has found communion with God in it; and, when he has found that, he perceives such a sweetness and savour in it, as to make it not easy for him to go forth again into the world.'—Against such an experience as this, which sees, and handles, and tastes of the Word of Life, there is no arguing. If a man should attempt to controvert this testimony, it would be worse than to deny the evidence of the natural senses; because it is founded upon the truth of God, which cannot deceive, and upon the power of God, *which worketh all in all*.*

SERLE.

Distinguishing marks of a true Christian.

1. HE has a true knowledge of the glory and excellency of God, that he is most worthy to be loved and praised for his own divine perfections, Psalm cxlv. 3.

2. God is his portion, Psalm lxxiii. 26.

* What Christian can refuse to join his wishes upon this subject with those of the devout Witsius? Or who can deserve the name of a Christian, who cannot taste the sweets of prayer, meditation, and retirement? 'There is nothing I so much desire in the world, as to pass all my time, even to my latest breath, in a total abstraction from all disputes, in a calm retreat from the hurry of the world and the deepest solitude, in holy prayers and devout meditations, in humble researches into the Book of God, and in secret communion with him; however obscure I might be in such a case, and however unknown (unless when religion should make it my duty to be otherwise) almost to my neighbours.'—Misc. vol. 1. p. 637.

And God's glory his great concern, Matt. vi. 22.

3. Holiness is his delight; nothing he so much longs for as to be holy, as God is holy, Phil. iii. 9—12.

4. Sin is his greatest enemy. This he hates for its own nature, for what it is in itself, being contrary to a holy God, Jer. ii. 1. Consequently, he hates all sin, Rom. vii. 24.—1 John, iii. 9.

5. The laws of God also are his delight, Psalm cxix. 97; Rom. vii. 22. These he observes, not out of constraint, from a servile fear of hell, but they are his choice, Psalm cxix. 30. The strict observance of them is not his bondage, but his greatest liberty, ver. 45. D. BRAINERD.

The Christian character should be marked by every thing that is lovely.

CHRISTIANITY is the most lovely of all religions. Wisdom, humility, peace, patience, meekness, moderation, and love, run through every part of the covenant of grace, like so many bright and beautiful colours joined together in the rainbow, that stretches its glory round the lower sky, and seals an ancient and everlasting peace between earth and heaven.

There is therefore the most sovereign and constraining obligation laid upon us Christians, to do all things that are lovely, that we may make our holy religion appear like itself, and cause Christianity to be beloved of men. Every Christian is in some degree intrusted with the honour of Christ, and with the credit and renown of his Gospel. Let us be watchful then to take all opportunities, and use all pious methods to make our hope appear glorious, to set the name of Christ in its own amiable light, and to *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour*.

How dishonourable and shameful a thing is it for a Christian to have an unlovely carriage, or to shew any thing in his conduct that is rough and forbidding! What a blemish does it cast upon the Gospel which he professes! Let us talk what we will of the sublimer glories of Christianity, and profess an acquaintance with the deepest mysteries,—yet, with all our flaming zeal for the faith, we may become scandals to the Gospel, if we abandon the practice of love. The world will judge of our religion by our temper and carriage.

We give occasion therefore to the world to upbraid us, *What do you more than others?* If we, who pretend to be Christians, who have professed the most lovely of all religions, are guilty of practices unworthy of that sacred name; when they see our carriage as bad as others, they will be ready to cry out, *What is your beloved more than another beloved?* What are your doctrines better than others, if your practice differs not from others? And are you willing it should be said of you, that you are the occasions of shame and scandal to the name and religion of Christ?

We should do all things that are amiable in the sight of men, that the Gospel may have the glory of it. Shall I say, 'The Gospel of Christ deserves it at our hands?' If the Gospel brings so rich a salvation to us, it is fitting we should bring a great deal of honour to it. How honourable is it to the Gospel of Christ, when persons of a rough, crabbed, sour temper, are converted by this Gospel, are become Christians indeed, and are made all over-amiable, and soft, and obliging in their deportments; when they carry it like new creatures, like persons that are changed indeed, that have much of the spirit of love in them, the temper of the Gospel, and the temper of heaven! It is this Gospel, as I have said before, that turns lions into lambs, and ravens into doves, the most savage creatures into mild and gentle.

While we are thus engaged in the practice of love, we have no need to abandon our zeal for the truth; but we should separate our divine zeal from all our own guilty passions, lest, instead of honouring God, we should destroy his children. The servant of the Lord may be bold and stedfast in the defence of the Gospel, but he must be gentle towards all men, ready to teach, and patient under injuries. He must not strive like a hero for victory; but, when any oppose themselves to the truth, *he must instruct them in meekness*, 2 Tim. ii, 25. While we are *peaceful and harmless*, we may be at the same time *prudent and wise*; our Lord Jesus has joined these two characters, Matt. x. 16. And it is a very lovely inscription for a disciple of Christ to wear in all his public and private conversation, *wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*. Thus we may guard ourselves from the malice of the world, while we attempt to win them by all the sacred

methods of humanity and divine goodness.
DR. WATTS.

The Christian-religion chiefly dwells on the mild and retiring virtues, in opposition to those which are of a more hardy and obtrusive character. She omits not, indeed, courage, vigour of resolution, eagerness of zeal, fortitude, perseverance, contempt of danger; but she dwells chiefly on lowliness, patience, silent and meek returns for ill-usage, gentleness, compassion, allowances for the prejudices and failings of others. It is a consequence of this, that she founds her code on humility and self-denial, though she avoids moroseness, austerities, and whatever might verge towards melancholy and misanthropy. By laying man low, and giving him a just impression of his unworthiness before God and man, and then, by teaching him to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, she fixes the only firm foundation of consistent morality, and especially of the milder virtues. But whilst all other religions, when they attempt this, fall into foolish and absurd injunctions, severities without reason, privations which vex without purifying man,—Christianity is as lovely as she is self-denying. She is friendly and tender-hearted, and full of the social and domestic affections and sympathies.

REV. D. WILSON.

What the Conversation of a Christian should be.

Let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel. As the Gospel is a gospel of truth and faithfulness, of sincerity and plainness, so our conversation should be sincere and upright, without deceit or fraud. As the Gospel is a gospel of peace, so a Christian conversation is a quiet, calm, and peaceable conversation. Christians should be men of peace, peace-makers, peace-preservers, lovers of peace, and livers in peace. The Gospel is a gospel of love and mercy, of grace and goodness; the badge and cognisance of Christ's disciples, the mark and brand of Christ's sheep, is *love unfeigned*: thus a Christian conversation is an amicable, loving, and charitable conversation. Again, the Gospel of Christ is a gospel of meekness and humility, and its chief lesson is humility: *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Matt. xi. 29; and *be ye clothed*

with humility, 1 Pet. v. 5; therefore a Christian conversation should partake largely of this spirit of humility. In a word, the Gospel of Christ is a gospel of holiness and purity; a Christian conversation must be a pure, and holy, and spotless conversation; saints in profession, must be saints indeed. And there is a comeliness in a Christian conversation, both as to the inward and the outward man—*Walk as becometh the Gospel of Christ*, that is, answerable to the precepts and commands of the Gospel, answerable to the promises and encouragements of the Gospel, answerable to the helps and supplies of grace which the Gospel affords, answerable to that grand pattern of holiness which the Gospel sets before us, and answerable to that high and glorious hope which the Gospel raises us up to the joyful expectation of; this is to *walk as becometh the Gospel of Christ*.

BURKITT.

Much has been said, and much written, to promote pious discourse among Christians, but I fear to little purpose. We have all reason to lament it, that so much corrupt communication proceeds out of our mouths, and so little of that which is good, and to the use of edifying; which might either manifest grace in him who speaks, or minister grace to them who hear. *And shall vain words never have an end?* Job xvi. 3. *Shall we reason always with unprofitable talk, and with speeches wherewith we can do no good,* but are in danger of doing hurt? Job xv. 3. Shall we never learn the art of introducing and keeping up profitable discourse in our conversation with our friends, such as we may hear of with comfort in that day, when *by our words we must be justified, and by our words we must be condemned?* A visit thus improved will be fruit abounding to a good account. What knowest thou, but that thou mayest thus save a soul from death, eternal death, or at least further a soul toward life, eternal life? Thus we must confess Christ before men, as those who are not ashamed of him or of his words. Reproach for it we must not fear, but say, 'if this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile;' nay we need not fear it, for perhaps even of them whose reproach we fear, if we manage it with meekness and humility, and without affectation, we may be had in honour.

Serious godliness is an awful thing, and will command respect.

We grant that our discourses with our friends cannot be turned entirely into this channel; allowance must be made for a great deal of common talk; yet even upon that there should appear an air of religion and godliness. Though a foreigner may speak English, yet ordinarily we can discern by his pronunciation, that he is a foreigner; so, though a good Christian, who belongs to another world, while he is here cannot avoid speaking much of the things of this world, yet he ought to do it in such a manner, that those he converses with may take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus, and may say unto him, 'Thou art a Christian, and thy speech betrays thee.'

If it appear that we make conscience of our words, and are afraid of offending with our lips; if in our tongue be the law of kindness; if we always speak of God and his providence with reverence and a holy awe, like the great Mr. Boyle, who in discourse was observed never to mention the name of God without a pause, leaving room for a pious thought; if we speak of common things after a godly sort, as those who accustom themselves to the language of Canaan, and not the language of Ashdod; God will hereby be honoured, our profession will be beautified, those we converse with will be edified and say that God is with us of a truth. Our speech, though it be not always of grace, should be always with grace, seasoned with it as with salt, which gives it its own relish and savour. . . .

Christians, I am not persuading you to any thing that is rude or morose, or that looks like an affectation of singularity. Nor am I declaiming against the innocent diversions and entertainments of conversation, which make it pleasant to yourselves and your friends, and are a relief to the fatigue of business; but I am only to remind you that you be very careful not to lose your religion in them. Remember that you are Christians, and you must speak and act in every thing as becomes saints. Remember that you are hastening into eternity, the days of your probation will shortly be numbered and finished; you are therefore concerned to spend your time on earth as those who are candidates and probationers for heaven, so that you may not seem to come short. Converse

with this world of sense, as those who know they must shortly remove to the world of spirits; and let this thought give a check to every thing that is vain and frothy, and put you upon considering, seeing you look for such things, *what manner of persons you ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness.*

Lay before you the example of the Lord Jesus, and as he was, so let us be in this world; walking as he walked; let us make visits as he did, with a design to do good, according as the sphere of our activity is. His lips dropped as a honey-comb, and fed many; let ours do so too, as we are able. Wherever he was, still he was about his Father's business; and let us, though unworthy such an honour, still endeavour to be so employed. When he visited his friends, he sympathised with them in their griefs, comforted them under their afflictions, reproved them for what was amiss, and entertained them with edifying and instructive discourse, taking rise for it usually by an admirable yet imitable art from common occurrences; and these things are written for our learning. *Go thou and do likewise.* MATT. HENRY.

The Christian is a man of Prayer.

YES, if the entire world, in the midst of which we live, be but one continued temptation; if all the situations in which we may be, and all the objects which environ us, seem united with our corruption, for the purpose of either weakening or seducing us; if riches corrupt, and poverty exasperate; if prosperity exalt, and affliction depress; if business prey upon, and ease render effeminate; if the sciences inflate, and ignorance lead us into error; if mutual intercourse trivially engage us too much, and solitude leave us too much to ourselves; if pleasure seduce, and pious works excite our pride; if health arouse the passions, and sickness nourish either lukewarmness or murmurings; in a word, if, since the fall of nature, every thing in, or around us, be a fresh danger to be dreaded; in a situation so deplorable, what hope of salvation, O, my God! could there be still remaining to man, if, from the bottom of his wretchedness, he had it not in his power to make his lamentations to be continually mounting toward the throne of thy mercy, in order to prevail that thou thyself mayest come to his aid; that thou mayest interfere to

put a check upon his passions, to clear up his errors, to sustain his weakness, to lessen his temptations, to abridge his hours of trials, and to save him from his backslidings?

The Christian is therefore a man of prayer; his origin, his situation, his nature, his wants, his place of abode, all inform him that prayer is necessary.

MASSILLON.

The Christian must be Holy and a Light to others.

THE churches of the Gentiles, while the blood of Christ was warm, and his actions fresh in the memories of men, were exemplary in holiness. They were *as stars shining in a perverse generation.* There was such a brightness in their conversations, that it pierced through the darkness of paganism, and made a visible difference between them and all others. Their words and actions were so full of zeal for the glory of God, of chastity, temperance, justice, charity, that the heathens from the holiness of their lives concluded the holiness of their law, and that the doctrine that produced such fruits could not be evil. The first light that discovered the truth of the Christian faith to many, was from the graces and virtues that appeared in the faithful. The purity of their lives, their courage in death, were as powerful to convert the world, as their sermons, disputations, and miracles. And those who were under such strong prejudices that they would not examine the doctrine of the Gospel, yet they could not but admire the integrity and innocence that was visible in the conversation of Christians. They esteemed their persons from the good qualities that were visible in them, when they hated the Christian name for the concealed evil they unreasonably suspected to be under it. This Tertullian excellently represents in his apology; 'The most part are so prejudiced against the name, and are possessed with such a blind hatred to it, that they make it a matter of reproach even to those whom they otherwise esteemed. 'Caius,' they say, 'is a good man; he hath no fault, but that he is a Christian.' Thus the excellent holiness of the professors of the Gospel forced a veneration from their enemies. But we are fallen from heaven, and mixed with the dust. Our conversation hath nothing singular in holiness to

distinguish us from the world. The same corrupt passions reign in professors of Christianity, as in those who are strangers from the sacred covenant. If we compare ourselves with the primitive church, we must confess our unworthiness to be called their successors. Sixteen hundred years are run out since the Son of God came down to sanctify and save the world, which are so many degrees, whereby we are descended from the first perfection. We are more distant from them in holiness than in time. So universal and great is the corruption, that it is almost as difficult to revive the dying faith of Christians, and to reform their lives according to the purity of their profession, as the conversion of the world was from heathenism to Christianity. . . .

It remains for me to press Christians to walk *as becometh the Gospel of Christ*, answerably to the holiness and purity of that divine institution, and to those great and strict obligations it lays upon us. The Gospel requires an entire holiness in all our faculties, an equal respect to all our duties: we are commanded to *cleanse ourselves from all pollutions of flesh and spirit*, to be *holy in all manner of conversation*. We are enjoined to be *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*: to be *holy, as he that hath called us is holy*. A certain measure of faith, and love, and obedience, a mediocrity in virtue, we must not content ourselves with. It is not a counsel of perfection given to some Christians only of a peculiar order and elevation; but the command of a law that without exception binds all; *Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*, Matt. v. 48. The Gospel gives no dispensation to any person, nor in any duty. The doctrine that asserts there are some excellent works to which the lower sort of Christians is not obliged, is equally pernicious, both to those who do them by presumption, as if they were not due, and were therefore meritorious; and to those who neglect them, by a blind security, as if they might be saved without striving to reach the highest degrees of obedience. It is a weak pretence, that because the consummate measure of sanctification can be attained only in the next life, therefore we should not endeavour after it here; for by sincere and constant endeavours we make nearer approaches to it; and according to the degrees of our progress such are those of our joy. . . . Although

we cannot reach to complete holiness in this imperfect state, yet it is not in vain that the Gospel prescribes it, and infuses into Christians those dispositions whereby they are gradually carried to the full accomplishment of it. Not to arrive to perfection is the weakness of the flesh, not to aspire after it is the fault of the spirit.

DR. BATES.

Jesus Christ requires believers to be lights to enlighten others. He was himself, whilst on earth, the light of the world; and he intended that his disciples, after his departure should, in some measure, be what he was. They are the stars which he lights up in the church to do in some measure what he did; to point out the right road to men, and to serve them as guides in the midst of darkness. It is well known that lights and light-houses are sometimes placed on rocks in the sea, which serve particularly in dark nights to point out both the sand-banks and rocks which the mariner should avoid, and the course which he ought to steer. Jesus Christ recommends to believers to be engaged in a similar office; he would have them resemble such light-houses, and show others how they are to direct their course, in such a manner as to avoid the rocks, and so to conduct themselves in dangerous passages, that they may finally arrive safe in port. *Let your light shine before men*, Matt. 16. What our Saviour here requires is both easy and certain of success. A vessel full of liquor when placed over a fire, soon rises and runs over. So a heart inflamed with the love of God cannot conceal the fire which burns within it. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and the eyes and the hands bear witness.

SUPERVILLE.

It is not enough for the Christian to do no ill, he must also do good.

It is not enough for a Christian to live harmlessly and abstain from ill, but he must do that which is good, Matt. vii. 21. For our Saviour excludes not only those who do against the will of his Father, but those who do not his Father's will. It is doing good which he requireth, and not the not doing evil only. This is an error which taketh hold of a great part of men, even of those who would seem to be religious. He is a reformed man, and acquits himself well, who abstains from fornication, adultery, who is no thief, no cozenor or

defrauder of other men, who will not lie, or swear, or such like: but as for doing any works of piety or charity, they think they are not required of them.

But they are much deceived: for God requires some duties at our hands, which he may reward not out of any merit, but out of his merciful promise in Christ. But *not doing ill* is no service rewardable. A servant who expects wages must not only do his master no harm, but some work that is good and profitable: otherwise the best Christian would be he that should live altogether idly; for none doth less harm than he that doth nothing at all. But he that increased not his master's talent, though he had not mispent it, is adjudged *an unprofitable servant, and cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth*, Matt. xxv. 30. So also, the tree that beareth no good fruit is hewn down, though it bore none that was evil: *The axe is laid to the root of the tree; every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire*, Matt. iii. 10. The fig-tree was cursed for having no fruit, Matt. xxi. 19, not for having evil fruit. And the sentence of condemnation, as you heard before, is to pass at that great day for not having done good works, not for doing ill ones: Go, ye cursed; for when I was hungry, ye fed me not, Matt. xxv. 41-43. . . .

A universal obedience submits not only to prohibitions of not doing evil, but puts in practice the injunctions of doing good. Many think they keep the commandments well, so they do nothing which they forbid: but the *not doing good* is a sin as well as the *doing of evil*. The unprofitable servant was cast into outer darkness, not for spending, but for not bestowing his master's talent. The five foolish virgins were shut out of doors, not for wasting, but for not having oil in their lamps. And the wicked shall be condemned at the last day, not for wresting the meat from the hungry, but for not feeding their poor brethren; not for stripping the naked out of his clothes, but for not clothing him. It will not be enough for thee that thou bringest forth no bad fruit, but thou must bring forth good fruit. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire*, Matt. iii. 10. What if thou steal not from thy brother? yet if thou open not thy hand to help and succour him, thou art

a robber. What if thou dost neither lie nor swear? yet if thou makest not thy mouth a glorious organ, and thy tongue a trumpet to sound forth and proclaim the love and mercy of God, thou art a deep and a round offender. What if no man can condemn thee for any evil? yet unless God and thine own conscience shall commend thee for some good thou hast done, thou art far from any assurance of faith, or *knowing thou knowest Christ* to be thy Redeemer.

JOS. MEDE.

The Christian and the Carnal Man most wonderful to each other.

WE have their opposite thoughts and speeches of each other. *They think it strange, &c. speaking evil of you*, 1 Pet. iv. 4. The Christian and the carnal man are most wonderful to each other. The one wonders to see the other walk so strictly, and deny himself to those carnal liberties which the most take, and take for so necessary, that they think they could not live without them. And the Christian thinks it strange that men should be so bewitched, and still remain children in the vanity of their turmoil, wearying and humouring themselves from morning to night, running after stories and fancies, ever busy doing nothing; wonders that the delights of earth and sin can so long entertain and please men, and persuade them to give Jesus Christ so many refusals, to turn from their life and happiness, and choose to be miserable, yea, and take much pains to make themselves miserable. He knows the depravedness and blindness of nature in this; knows it by himself, that once he was so, and therefore wonders not so much at them as they do at him; yet, the unreasonableness and frenzy of that course, now appears to him in so strong a light, that he cannot but wonder at these woful mistakes. But the ungodly wonder far more at him, not knowing the inward cause of his different choice and way. The believer, as we said, is upon the hill; he is going up, and looking back on them in the valley, sees their way tending to, and ending in death, and calls them to retire from it as loud as he can; he tells them the danger; but either they hear not, nor understand his language, or will not believe him: finding present ease and delight in their way, they will not consider and suspect the end of it; but they judge him the fool who will not share with them,

and take that way where such multitudes go, and with such ease, and some of them with their train, and horses, and coaches, and all their pomp; while he, and a few straggling poor creatures like him, are climbing up a craggy steep hill, and will by no means come off from that way, and partake of theirs; not knowing, or not believing that at the top of that hill he climbs, is that happy, glorious city, the new Jerusalem, whereof he is a citizen, and whither he is tending; not believing that he knows the end both of their way and of his own, and therefore would reclaim them if he could, but will by no means return unto them: as the Lord commanded the Prophet, *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them*, Jer. xv. 19.

The world thinks it strange that a Christian can spend so much time in secret prayer, not knowing, nor being able to conceive of the sweetness of the communion with God which he attains in that way. Yea, while he feels it not, how sweet it is, beyond the world's enjoyments, to be but seeking after it, and waiting for it! Oh! the delight that there is in the bitterest exercise of repentance, in the very tears, much more in the succeeding harvest of joy! 'The intemperate are strangers to true pleasure,' says Aristotle. It is strange unto a carnal man to see the child of God disdain the pleasures of sin; he knows not the higher and purer delights and pleasures that the Christian is called to, and of which he hath, it may be, some part at present; but, however, the fulness of them in assured hope.

The strangeness of the world's way to the Christian, and of his to it, though that is somewhat unnatural, yet affects them very differently. He looks on the deluded sinners with pity, they on him with hate. Their part, which is here expressed, of wondering, breaks out in reviling: they *speak evil of you*, and what is their voice? What mean these precise fools? will they readily say. What course is this they take, contrary to all the world? Will they make a new religion, and condemn all their honest, civil neighbours that are not like them? Ay, forsooth, do all go to hell, think you, except you, and those that follow your way? We are for no more than good-fellowship and liberty; and as for so much reading and praying, those are but brain-sick, melancholy con-

ceits: a man may go to heaven like his neighbour, without all this ado. Thus they let fly at their pleasure. But this troubles not the composed Christian's mind at all: while curs snarl and bark about him, the sober traveller goes on his way, and regards them not. He that is acquainted with the way of holiness can more than endure the counter-blasts and airs of scoffs and revilings; he accounts them his glory and his riches. So, Moses *esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*, Heb. xi. 26.

LEIGHTON.

Power of Habits in forming the Moral Character.

IN like manner, as habits belonging to the body are produced by external acts, so habits of the mind are produced by the exertion of inward practical principles; i. e. by carrying them into act, or acting upon them the principles of obedience, of veracity, justice, and charity. Nor can those habits be formed by any external course of action, otherwise than as it proceeds from these principles; because it is only these inward principles exerted, which are strictly acts of obedience, of veracity, of justice, and of charity. So likewise, habits of attention, industry, self-government are, in the same manner, acquired by exercise; and habits of envy and revenge by indulgence, whether in outward act, or in thought and intention; i. e. inward act, for such intention is an act. Resolutions also to do well are properly acts. And endeavouring to enforce upon our own minds a practical sense of virtue, or to beget in others that practical sense of it which a man really has himself, is a virtuous act. All these, therefore, may and will contribute towards forming good habits. But, going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it, this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form an habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible, i. e. form an habit of insensibility to all moral considerations. For, from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions by being repeated, grow weaker. Thoughts, by often passing through the mind, are felt less sensibly; being accustomed to danger begets intrepidity, i. e. lessens fear; to distress, lessens the passion of pity; to

instances of others' mortality, lessens the sensible apprehension of our own. And from these two observations together, that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us, it must follow, that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, whilst these motives and excitements themselves are, by proportionable degrees, growing less sensible, i. e. are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen. And experience confirms this; for active principles, at the very time that they are less lively in perception than they were, are found to be somehow wrought more thoroughly into the temper and character, and become more effectual in influencing our practice. The three things just mentioned may afford instances of it. Perception of danger is a natural excitement of passive fear and active caution; and by being inured to danger, habits of the latter are gradually wrought, at the same time that the former gradually lessens. Perception of distress in others is a natural excitement passively to pity, and actively to relieve it; but let a man set himself to attend to, inquire out, and relieve distressed persons, and he cannot but grow less and less sensibly affected with the various miseries of life, with which he must become acquainted; when yet, at the same time, benevolence, considered not as a passion, but as a practical principle of action, will strengthen; and, whilst he passively compassionates the distressed less, he will acquire a greater aptitude actively to assist and befriended them. So also, at the same time that the daily instances of men's dying around us give us daily a less sensible passive feeling or apprehension of our own mortality, such instances greatly contribute to the strengthening a practical regard to it in serious men; i. e. to form a habit of acting with a constant view to it. And this seems again further to shew, that passive impressions made upon our minds by admonition, experience, example, though they may have a remote efficacy, and a very great one, towards forming active habits, yet can have this efficacy no otherwise than by inducing us to such a course of action; and that it is not being affected, and so, but acting, which forms those

habits; only it must be always remembered, that real endeavours to enforce good impressions upon ourselves are a species of virtuous action. Nor do we know how far it is possible, in the nature of things, that effects should be wrought in us at once equivalent to habits; i. e. what is wrought by use and exercise. However, the thing insisted upon is, not what may be possible, but what is in fact the appointment of nature, which is, that active habits are to be formed by exercise. Their progress may be so gradual as to be imperceptible of its steps; it may be hard to explain the faculty by which we are capable of habits, throughout its several parts, and to trace it up to its original, so as to distinguish it from all others in our mind; and it seems as if contrary effects were to be ascribed to it. But the thing in general, that our nature is formed to yield, in some such manner as this, to use and exercise, is matter of certain experience.

Thus, by accustoming ourselves to any course of action, we get an aptness to go on, a facility, readiness, and often pleasure in it. The inclinations which rendered us averse to it grow weaker; the difficulties in it, not only the imaginary, but the real ones, lessen; the reasons for it offer themselves of course to our thoughts upon all occasions; and the least glimpse of them is sufficient to make us go on in a course of action to which we have been accustomed. And practical principles appear to grow stronger, absolutely in themselves, by exercise, as well as relatively, with regard to contrary principles; which, by being accustomed to submit, do so habitually, and of course. And thus a new character, in several respects, may be formed; and many habitudes of life, not given by nature, but which nature directs us to acquire.

BP. BUTLER.

Power of Quiet and Domestic Piety.

It is not altogether inconsiderable to observe that the holy Virgin came to this great perfection and state of piety by a few, and those, modest and even exercises, and external actions. St. Paul travelled over the world, preached to the Gentiles, disputed against the Jews, confounded heretics, writ excellently learned letters, suffered dangers, injuries, affronts and persecutions to the height of wonder, and by these violences of life, action and patience, obtained the crown of an ex-

cellent religion and devotion: but the holy Virgin, although she was engaged sometimes in an active life, and in the exercise of an ordinary and small economy and government of a family, yet she arrived to her perfections by the means of a quiet and silent piety; the internal actions of love, devotion and contemplation: and instructs us, that not only those who have opportunity and powers of a magnificent religion or a pompous charity, or miraculous conversion of souls, or assiduous and effectual preachings, or exterior demonstrations of corporal mercy, shall have the greatest crowns and the addition of degrees and accidental rewards; but the silent affections, the splendors of an internal devotion, the unions of love, humility and obedience, the daily offices of prayer and praises sung to God, the acts of faith and fear, of patience and meekness, of hope and reverence, repentance and charity, and those graces which walk in a veil and silence, make great ascents to God, and as sure progress to favour and a crown, as the more ostentatious and laborious exercises of a more solemn religion. No man needs to complain of want of power, or opportunities for religious perfections; a devout woman in her closet, praying with much zeal and affections for the conversion of souls, is in the same order to a shining, like the stars in glory, as he, who by excellent discourses puts it into a more forward disposition, to be actually performed. . . . Many times God is present in the still voice, and private retirements of a quiet religion, and the constant spiritualities of an ordinary life; when the loud and impetuous winds, and the shining fires of more laborious, and expensive actions are profitable to others only, like a tree of balsam distilling precious liquor for others, not for its own use.

BP. TAYLOR.

True Grace will have a uniform influence on the whole character.

IMPRESSIONS are then saving when they are social: when they accompany one another, then do they likewise 'accompany salvation.'

Many, possibly, will pretend to high raptures, and some kind of ecstatic efforts of their love to God: many will boast much of their overflowing joys, that their souls are even distended with comforts,

and as full of peace and satisfaction as they can hold. Many may, possibly, be as confident of their election as if God had unclasped the book of life to them, turned them to the very page and line, and shewed them their names written there from all eternity. But, if you would not be deluded, be sure you look how these things are accompanied in you. If ever your love cast out a holy and filial fear of God, or your confidence and rejoicing supplant a holy trembling before him; if your assurance scorn poverty of spirit, meekness, and a holy mourning, as too mean, and too poor associates; if your faith reject good works, as too legal; or your works supersede faith, as unnecessary: believe it, these are not 'things that accompany salvation' in you; but they are glaring delusions of the devil, who hath transformed himself into an angel of light, to impose false hopes and deceitful confidences upon you. When they are separated one from another, they are separated from salvation.

They are then saving when they are grown as it were natural to us, and make up a frame of spirit.

That man cannot safely conclude that he is in a state of salvation, who only now and then feels some violent impulses and passionate motions towards that which is holy: for men may hurry apace at first setting out, but then they quickly tire. But, where grace is true and genuine, there is ordinarily digested and turned into our very nature; so that it will, in some sort, be as natural to us to serve and please God, as ever formerly it was too natural to us to sin against and provoke him. Indeed, the very best are subject to much instability. Many times it is with them as with the sea, the highest spring tides have the lowest ebbs. Sometimes their souls are like the chariots of Aminadab; and, anon, they drive on heavily: but then they are sensible of their abatement, fluxes, and changes; and, when they cannot find that vivacity and quickness of spirit which sometimes carried them forth in the performance of duties, they mourn under their present dulness and stupidity, and endeavour again to recover their former excellency.

Where these impressions are saving they are thriving and improving.

The light of the righteous is as the dawn that waxeth brighter and brighter

unto the perfect day. Declining Christians have great reason to suspect themselves; and if they quickly repent not, and recover themselves to their pristine state, and do their first works with their first zeal and alacrity, they may sadly suspect that their graces are not true; for growth in grace is the best evidence of truth of grace. Indeed, in young converts there may be a great deal of heat and fervour, which afterwards, when they are more established Christians, may abate; and they may think this a decay in their graces, when indeed it is not. For we must distinguish between a passionate love of God, and a sedate, serene love of God. Our passions do, in our first conversion, mingle more with our graces than afterwards; and then we are like a torrent, very swift and rapid, but neither so deep nor so strong. And, as little brooks and torrents, though

they run very fiercely, yet stop, and purle, and murmur at every small pebble that lies in their way; but great rivers, which seem to move with a slow and grave pace, yet bear down all mounds and dams, and whatsoever is in their way to oppose their passage. So is it here; grave and settled Christians may seem to move more slowly, without any noise or tumult; but they have a great depth and strength in them, and are able to bear down before them those temptations and oppositions, at which young novices, who are more fierce and noisy, are forced to stop, complain, and murmur. And we must estimate the growth of our graces, not only, nor indeed so much, by the violence of its efforts, as its prevalency and effectualness, which proceeds from its being more radical and habitual in us.

BR. HOPKINS.

SECTION V.—ON THE WORLD.

An estimate of the World.

THE world has nothing solid, nothing durable; it is only a fashion, and a fashion which passeth away. Yes, sirs, the tenderest friendships end. Honours are specious titles, which time effaces. Pleasures are amusements, which leave only a lasting and painful repentance. Riches are torn from us by the violence of men, or escape us by their own instability. Grandeurs moulder away of themselves. Glory and reputation at length lose themselves in the abysses of an eternal oblivion. The torrent of this world, whatever pains are taken to stop it. Every thing is carried away by a rapid train of passing moments, and by continual revolutions we arrive, frequently without thinking of it, at that fatal point, where time finishes, and eternity begins.

Happy then the Christian soul, who, obeying the precept of Jesus Christ, loves not the world, nor any thing that composes it: who wisely uses it as a mean, without irregularly cleaving to it as his end; who knows how to rejoice without dissipation, to sorrow without despair, to desire without anxiety, to acquire without injustice, to possess without pride, and to lose without pain! Happy yet farther the soul, who rising above itself, in spite of the body

which encumbers it, remounts to its origin; passes without pausing beyond created things, and happily loses itself in the bosom of its Creator!

ABP. FLECHIER.

The sufferings of Christ are the best medium through which to view the world in every form, and under all possible circumstances of vicissitude, of grandeur, of poverty, of affliction. What are all its enjoyments, most splendid objects, and highest style of dignity, when brought to the cross? Beheld in that mirror, pleasure is divested of its charms, honour appears a transient bubble, and even crowns themselves lose their lustre. If any thing can emphatically proclaim that *all is vanity*, it is the cross. To pour infinite contempt on all sublunary greatness, He, *whose is the earth and the fulness thereof*, took the form of a servant, chose a manger for his birthplace, and an accursed tree as his bed of honour. If any thing can humble pride, and mortify the claims of aspiring grandeur, as well as raise the hope of oppressed virtue, it must be, to view the Lord of universal nature voluntarily choosing that line of life which is most exposed to affliction, and those connexions, which human wisdom and human greatness invariably despise. To suffer and die was

the principal part of his plan, and the cross, the favourite medium through which it was to be unfolded.

REV. R. DE COURCY.

It is disparagement enough, that the Apostle casts upon all the visible things of this world, that *the things which are seen are temporal*. Be they never so glorious, yet being transitory, they cannot be worthy of our hearts. Who would care for a house of glass, if never so curiously painted and gilded? All things that are measured by time are thus brittle. Bodily substances, of what kind soever, lie open to the eye; and, being seen, can be in no other than a fading condition. Even that goodly fabric of heaven, which we see and admire, must be changed, and in a sort, dissolved. How much more vanishing are all earthly glories! And by how much shorter their continuance is, so much lower must be their valuation. We account him foolish, that will dote too much upon a flower, though never so beautiful; because we know it can be but a month's pleasure, and no care, no art can preserve it from withering. What madness then were it in us, to set our hearts upon these perishing contentments which we must soon mutually leave; we them, they us! Eternity is that only thing which is worthy to take up the thoughts of a wise man: that, being added to evil, makes the evil infinitely more intolerable; and being added to good, makes the good infinitely more desirable. O eternity! thou bottomless abyss of misery to the wicked; thou indeterminable pitch of joy to the Saints of God; what soul is able to comprehend thee? What strength of understanding is able to conceive of thee? Be thou ever in my thoughts, ever before mine eyes. Be thou the scope of all my actions, of all my endeavours; and, in respect of thee, let all this visible world be to me as nothing. And, since only the things which are not seen by the eye of sense, are eternal, Lord, sharpen thou the eyes of my faith, that I may see those things invisible; and may, in that sight, enjoy thy blessed eternity!

BP. HALL.

Consider the universal judgment even of worldly men in their last and serious hours, when the prospect of eternal things is open before them. How vastly different are their apprehensions

of temporal things in the review, from what they were in their vicious desires! How often do they break forth in the sorrowful words of the Apostle, *We have been toiling all night, and caught nothing!* When there are but a few remaining sands in the glass of time, and death shakes the glass before them, how powerfully do they preach of the emptiness and uncertainty of things below, and sigh out in Solomon's phrase, *All is vanity!* And this is more singularly observable in those who have had the fullest enjoyment of earthly things. How do they complain of the vain world and their vainer hearts, when experience has convinced them of their woful folly! Solomon, who was among other princes, as the sun in the midst of the planets, that obscures them by his illustrious brightness; he that had surveyed this continent of vanity, to make an experiment whether any satisfaction could be found in it; at last sadly declares, that all things here below are but several kinds and ranks of vanities, as ineffectual to make men happy, as counterfeit jewels of several colours are to enrich the possessor. Nay, they are not only vanity, but vexation, an empty shew that has nothing real but the vexation of disappointment. And shall we not value the judgment of men when they are best instructed, and give credit to their testimony when they are sincere? Certainly in these approaches to the divine judgment they are most considerate and serious; they have the truest and justest thoughts of things, and most freely declare them. O the astonishing folly of men! They will not be convinced of the error of their ways till they come to the end of them, and the sun is set, and no time remains for their returning into the way of life.

DR. BATES.

An estimate of the world in the view of Eternity: Being the substance of a Letter addressed by Villiers, duke of Buckingham, in his last illness, to Dr. Barrow.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,

I HAVE always looked upon you as a man of true virtue; and know you to be a person of sound judgment. For, however I may act in opposition to the principles of religion, or the dictates of reason, I can honestly assure you, I had always the highest veneration for both. The world and I may shake hands, for I dare affirm

we are heartily weary of each other. O, doctor, what a prodigal have I been of the most valuable of all possessions—*time*! I have squandered it away with a persuasion it was lasting: and now, when a few days would be worth a hecatomb of worlds, I cannot flatter myself with a prospect of half a dozen hours.

How despicable is that man who never prays to his God but in the time of his distress! In what manner can he supplicate that *omnipotent* Being in his affliction with reverence, whom, in the tide of his prosperity, he never remembered with dread? Do not brand me with *infidelity*, when I tell you I am almost ashamed to offer up my petitions to the throne of grace; or of imploring that Divine mercy in the next world which I have so scandalously abused in this. Shall ingratitude to man be looked on as the blackest of crimes, and not ingratitude to God? Shall an insult offered to the king be looked on in the most offensive light; and yet no notice taken when the King of kings is treated with indignity and disrespect?

The companions of my former libertinism would scarce believe their eyes were you to shew them this epistle. They would laugh at me as a dreaming enthusiast, or pity me as a timorous wretch, who was shocked at the appearance of futurity. They are more entitled to my pity than my resentment. A future state may very well strike terror into any man who has not acted well in this life; and he must have an uncommon share of courage who does not shrink at the presence of God.

You see, my dear doctor, the apprehensions of death will soon bring the most profligate to a proper use of their understanding. I am haunted by remorse, despised by my acquaintance, and, I fear, forsaken by my God. There is nothing so dangerous as extraordinary abilities. I cannot be accused of vanity now, by being sensible that I was once possessed of uncommon qualifications; as I sincerely regret that I was ever blessed with any at all. My rank in life still made these accomplishments more conspicuous; and, fascinated with the general applause which they procured, I never considered about the proper means by which they should be displayed. Hence, to purchase a smile from a blockhead, whom I despised, I have frequently treated the virtuous with disre-

spect; and sported with the holy name of Heaven, to obtain a laugh from a parcel of fools, who were entitled to nothing but my contempt.

Your men of wit look on themselves as discharged from the duties of religion; and confine the doctrines of the Gospel to people of meaner understandings; and look on that man to be of a narrow genius who studies to be good. What a pity that the Holy Writings are not made the criterion of true judgment! Favour me, my dear doctor, with a visit as soon as possible. Writing to you gives me some ease. I am of opinion this is the last visit I shall ever solicit from you. My distemper is powerful. Come and pray for the departing spirit of the unhappy

BUCKINGHAM.

The Delusion under which the Worldly-minded are.

SHOULD a spirit of superior rank, who is a stranger to human nature, accidentally alight upon the earth, and take a survey of its inhabitants, what would his notions of us be? Would not he think, that we are a species of beings made for quite different ends and purposes than what we really are? Must not he imagine that we were placed in this world to get riches and honours? Would not he think that it was our duty to toil after wealth, and station, and title? Nay, would not he believe we were forbidden poverty by threats of eternal punishment, and enjoined to pursue our pleasures under pain of damnation? He would certainly imagine that we were influenced by a scheme of duties quite opposite to those which are indeed prescribed to us. And truly, accordingly to such an imagination, he must conclude that we are a species of the most obedient creatures in the universe; that we are constant to our duty; and that we keep a steady eye on the end for which we were sent hither.

But how great would be his astonishment, when he learnt that we were beings not designed to exist in this world above threescore and ten years; and that the greatest part of this busy species fall short even of that age! How would he be lost in horror and admiration, when he should know that this set of creatures, who lay out all their endeavours for this life, which

scarce deserves the name of existence ; when, I say, he should know that this set of creatures are to exist to all eternity in another life, for which they make no preparations ? Nothing can be a greater disgrace to reason, than that men, who are persuaded of these two different states of being, should be perpetually employed in providing for a life of threescore and ten years, and neglecting to make provision for that which, after many myriads of years, will be still new, and still beginning ; especially when we consider that our endeavours for making ourselves great, or rich, or honourable, or whatever else we place our happiness in, may, after all, prove unsuccessful ; whereas, if we constantly and sincerely endeavour to make ourselves happy in the other life, we are sure that our endeavours will succeed, and that we shall not be disappointed of our hope.

The following question is started by one of the schoolmen. Supposing the whole body of the earth were a great ball or mass of the finest sand, and that a single grain or particle of this sand should be annihilated every thousand years : supposing then that you had it in your choice to be happy all the while this prodigious mass of sand was consuming by this slow method till there was not a grain of it left, on condition you were to be miserable for ever after ; or supposing you might be happy for ever after, on condition you would be miserable till the whole mass of sand were thus annihilated, at the rate of one sand in a thousand years ; which of these two cases would you make your choice ?

It must be confessed in this case, so many thousands of years are to the imagination as a kind of eternity, though in reality they do not bear so great a proportion to that duration which is to follow them, as an unit does to the greatest number which you can put together in figures, or as one of those sands to the supposed heap. Reason therefore tells us, without any manner of hesitation, which would be the better part in this choice. However, as I have before intimated, our reason might in such a case be so overset by the imagination, as to dispose some persons to sink under the consideration of the great length of the first part of this duration, and of the great distance of that second

duration which is to succeed it. The mind, I say, might give itself up to that happiness which is at hand, considering that it is so very near, and that it would last so very long. But when the choice we actually have before us is this, whether we will choose to be happy for the space of threescore and ten years, nay, perhaps, of only twenty or ten years, I might say, of only a day or an hour, and miserable to all eternity ; or on the contrary, miserable for this short term of years, and happy for a whole eternity ; what words are sufficient to express that folly and want of consideration which in such a case makes a wrong choice ?

I here put the case, even at the worst, by supposing (what seldom happens) that a course of virtue makes us miserable in this life ; but if we suppose (as it generally happens) that virtue will make us more happy, even in this life, than a contrary course of vice ; how can we sufficiently admire the stupidity or madness of those persons who are capable of making so absurd a choice !

Every wise man, therefore, will consider this life only as it may conduce to the happiness of the other, and cheerfully sacrifice the pleasures of a few years to those of an eternity.

ADDISON.

The Force of the World.

NEED I stop to speak of the force of the world ? Like a rapid stream, it carries all before it. None but they who are *born of God* ever really overcome it. It has been the same in all ages and circumstances. If it be impeded and stopped in one channel, it breaks out in another. It bears along the restraints of education and conscience, and overcomes the embankments which law or morals or religion can throw up. Where it cannot flow in a full tide, it works a secret course. It spreads like a resistless torrent on all hands. The young and amiable, whom religion especially addresses, and whose consciences, yet tender, might be thought most susceptible of piety, are carried along, as well as the aged and infirm, from whose feeble but tenacious grasp all earthly objects are escaping. The acute and penetrating, whose minds, enlarged by science, might be supposed to soar to higher pursuits, and who cannot but detect

the miserable folly of a worldly life, mingle in the throng with the uneducated and trifling. The disappointed still press on in the train, in spite of repeated experience. The very ministers of the sanctuary are at times not altogether free from the infection, and confirm by a low standard of religious feeling and instruction, the errors of the unthinking multitude. Even those who openly inveigh in the spirit of a proud philosophy against the trifles of life, submit to its tyranny. Rooted in short in a corrupt heart, the spirit of the world acts with a force which only true and spiritual religion, founded on the almighty grace of Christ Jesus, can effectually withstand.

REV. D. WILSON.

We are rather to retreat from the World than oppose it.

WE are rather to retreat from the world, than oppose it. Defilement is inseparable from the world. A man can nowhere rest his foot on it without sinking. A strong principle of assimilation combines the world and the heart together. There are, especially, certain occasions, when the current hurries a man away, and he has lost the religious government of himself. When the pilot finds, on making the port of Messina, that the ship will not obey the helm, he knows that she is got within the influence of that attraction, which will hurry her in the whirlpool. We are to avoid the danger, rather than to oppose it. This is a great doctrine of Scripture. An active force against the world is not so much inculcated, as a retreating, declining spirit. *Keep thyself unspotted from the world.*

REV. R. CECIL.

The Misery of an Irreligious Old Age.

WHEN the pulse indeed beats high, and we are flushed with youth, and health, and vigour; when all goes on prosperously, and success seems almost to anticipate our wishes; then we feel not the want of the consolations of religion; but when fortune frowns, or friends forsake us; when sorrow, or sickness, or old age, comes upon us, then it is that the superiority of the pleasures of religion is established over those of dissipation and vanity, which are ever apt to fly from us when we are most in want of their aid. There is scarcely a

more melancholy sight to a considerate mind, than that of an old man, who is a stranger to those only true sources of satisfaction. How affecting, and at the same time how disgusting, is it, to see such a one awkwardly catching at the pleasures of his younger years, which are now beyond his reach; or feebly attempting to retain them, while they mock his endeavours and elude his grasp! To such a one, gloomily indeed does the evening of life set in! All is sour and cheerless. He can neither look back with complacency, nor forward with hope: while the aged Christian, relying on the assured mercy of his Redeemer, can calmly reflect, that his dismissal is at hand, and that his redemption draweth nigh: while his strength declines, and his faculties decay, he can quietly repose himself on the fidelity of God: and at the very entrance of the valley of the shadow of death, he can lift up an eye, dim perhaps, and feeble, yet occasionally sparkling with hope, and confidently looking forward to the near possession of his heavenly inheritance, even to those joys which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Never were there times which inculcated more forcibly, than those in which we live, the wisdom of seeking a happiness beyond the reach of human vicissitudes. What striking lessons have we had of the precarious tenure of all sublunary possessions! Wealth, and power, and prosperity, how peculiarly transitory and uncertain! But Religion dispenses her choicest cordials in the seasons of exigence, in poverty, in exile, in sickness, and in death. The essential superiority of that support which is derived from religion is less felt, at least it is less apparent, when the Christian is in full possession of riches, and splendour, and rank, and all the gifts of nature and fortune. But when all these are swept away by the rude hand of time, or the rough blasts of adversity, the true Christian stands, like the glory of the forest, erect and vigorous; stripped indeed of his summer foliage, but more than ever discovering to the observing eye the solid strength of his substantial texture;

Pondere fixa suo est, nudosque per æra ramos
Attollens, trunco non frondibus efficit umbram.

WILBERFORCE.

The power of Faith in Christ to shew us the vanity and poverty of the World.

‘GET an eye of faith, to look through and above the creature.’ A man shall never get to look off from the world, till he can look beyond it. For the soul will have holdfast of something; and the reason why men cling so much to the earth is, because they have no assurance, if they let go that hold, of having any subsistence elsewhere. Labour, therefore, to get an interest in Christ, to find an everlasting footing in the steadfastness of God’s promises in him, and that will make thee willing to suffer the loss of all things; it will implant a kind of hatred and disestimation of all the most precious endearments, which thy soul did feed upon before. Saint Peter saith of wicked men, that they are purblind, *they cannot see afar off*: they can see nothing but that which is next them; and therefore no marvel, if their thoughts cannot reach unto the end of the creature. There is in a dim eye the same constant and habitual indisposition, which sometimes happeneth unto a sound eye by reason of a thick mist: though a man be walking in a very short lane, yet he sees no end of it: and so a natural man cannot reach to the period of earthly things. Death and danger are still a great way out of his sight: whereas the eye of faith can look upon them as already expiring; and, through them, look upon him who therefore gives the creatures unto us, that in them we might see his power, and taste his goodness. And nature itself methinks may seem to have intended some such thing as this, in the very order of the creatures. Downwards a man’s eye hath something immediately to fix on; all is shut up in darkness save the very surface, to note, that we should have our desires shut up too from those earthly things which are put under our feet, and hid from our eyes, and buried in their own deformity. All the beauty, and all the fruit of the earth is placed on the very outside of it, to show how short and narrow our affections should be towards it. But upward the eye finds scarce any thing to bound it: all is transparent and diaphanous, to note how vast our affections should be towards God; how endless our thoughts and desires of his kingdom; how present to our faith the heavenly things should be, even at the greatest distance. The Apostle saith, that

faith is the substance of things hoped for, that it gives being and present subsistency to things far distant from us; makes those things which, in regard of natural causes, are very remote, in regard of God’s promises, to seem hard at hand. And therefore though there were many hundred years to come in the Apostle’s time, and for aught we know, may yet be to the dissolution of the world, yet the Apostle tells us, that even then it was the last hour; because, faith being able distinctly to see the truth and promises of God, and the endlessness of that life which is then presently to be revealed, the infinite excess of vastness in that, made that which was otherwise a great space, even seem as nothing, no more in comparison, than the length of a cane or trunk, through which a man looks on the heavens, or some vast country. And ever, the greater magnitude and light there is in a body, the smaller will the medium or distance seem from it. . . We, by faith apprehending an infinite and everlasting glory, must needs conceive any thing through which we look upon it to be but short and vanishing. And therefore though the promises were afar off, in regard of their own existence, yet the patriarchs did not only see but embrace them; their faith seemed to nullify and swallow up all the distance. *Abraham saw Christ’s day, and was glad*: he looked upon those many ages which were between him and his promised seed, as upon small and inconsiderable distances in comparison of that endless glory into which they ran: they were but as a curtain or piece of hangings, which divide one room in a house from another. Labour therefore to get a distinct view of the height and length, and breadth, and depth, and the unsearchable love of God in Christ, to find in thine own soul the truth of God in his promises, and that his word abideth for ever; and that will make all the glory of other things to seem but as grass.

BP. REYNOLDS.

All the glory of Man is as the flower of the field.

THERE is, indeed, a great deal of seeming difference betwixt the outward conditions of life amongst men. Shall the rich, and honourable, and beautiful, and healthful go in together, under the same name, with the baser and unhappier part, the

poor, wretched sort of the world, who seem to be born for nothing but sufferings and miseries? At least, hath the wise no advantage beyond the fools? Is all grass? Make you no distinction? No, *all is grass*; or if you will have some other name, be it so: yet still, this is true, that all flesh is grass; and if that glory which shines so much in your eyes, must have a difference, then this is all it can have,—it is but *the flower* of that same grass; somewhat above the common grass in gayness, a little comelier, and better apparelled than it, but partaker of its frail and fading nature; it hath no privilege nor immunity that way, yea, of the two, is the less durable, and usually shorter lived; at the best it decays with it: *The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.*

How easily and quickly hath the highest splendour of a man's prosperity been blasted, either by men's power, or by the immediate hand of God! The Spirit of the Lord blows upon it, as Isaiah there

and by that, not only withers the grass, but the flower fades though never so fair. *When thou correctest man for iniquity, says David, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth,* Psal. xxxix. 11. How many have the casualties of fire, or war, or shipwreck, in one day, or in one night, or in a small part of either, turned out of great riches into extreme poverty? And the instances are not few, of those who have, on a sudden, fallen from the top of honour into the foulest disgraces, not by degrees coming down the stair they went up, but tumbled down headlong. And the most vigorous beauty and strength of body, how doth a few days' sickness, or if it escape that, a few years' time, blast that flower! Yea, those higher advantages which have somewhat both of truer and more lasting beauty in them, the endowments of wit, and learning, and eloquence, yea, and of moral goodness and virtue; yet they cannot rise above this world; they are still, in all their glory, but the *flower of grass*; their root is in the earth. Natural ornaments are of some use in this present life, but they reach no further. When men have wasted their strength, and endured the toil of study night and day, it is but a small parcel of knowledge they can attain to, and they are forced to lie down in the dust in the midst of their pursuit of it. That head that lodges most sciences, shall within a while

be disfurnished of them all, and the tongue that speaks most languages be silenced.

The great projects of kings and princes, and they also themselves, come under this same notion: all the vast designs that are framing in their heads fall to the ground in a moment; *They return to their dust, and in that day all their thoughts perish,* Psal. cxlvi. 4. Archimedes was killed in the midst of his demonstration.

If they themselves did consider this in the heat of their affairs, it would much allay the swelling and loftiness of their minds; and if they who live upon their favour would consider it, they would not value it at so high a rate, and buy it so dear as often as they do. *Men of low degree are vanity,* says the Psalmist (Psal. lxii. 9); but he adds, *Men of high degree are a lie.* From base, mean persons, we expect nothing; but the estate of great persons promises fair, and often keeps not; therefore they are a lie, although they can least endure that word.

LEIGHTON.

Lord, teach us to number our days.

MANKIND generally miscount their time. The most part reckon upon living to the utmost period of human life; that is, that they shall see threescore years and ten, or fourscore. The fallacy of which computation may be easily found out by this observation; let a man turn his eyes round him, either in the place he lives, or in any country he is in, he shall see but few left to die at that age.

The most part again count, that the common measure of human life is a much longer duration than really it is; after they have promised themselves a life of seventy or eighty years, they look upon this as a very long succession of time, and a vast continuance in the world; when yet really it is not. And the surest way to be convinced and made sensible of this, is, not to look forward to the time we have no experience of, but to look backwards to the time that is past, and of which we have had an actual distinct perception: and here let us reflect how quickly are thirty, forty, or fifty years gone; how suddenly they are passed away, like a dream! And may we not be sure, that any time that remains shall pass as swiftly, and be as short?

Some number the same years twice over. They reckon it as time future that is past;

that is, they count upon living threescore and ten years, or fourscore, without considering that perhaps the best half, and which is also the most improvable part of them, is already gone. What a cheat is this that men put upon themselves! They have accustomed themselves to think that seventy or eighty years is a very long tract of time, and have swelled their mind with a big idea of the same; and they still fix this idea to the short remains of a life that is already much worn out, or has seen thirty, forty, fifty, or perhaps sixty of these years already past; and so thirty, twenty, or perhaps only ten years are counted, and promised as much upon, as if they were fourscore!

Others count and reckon upon the time that is lost: that is, they reckon upon the whole measure and duration of three or fourscore years, and never make a deduction of the time that is lost. As, for instance, so much time is lost in sloth and idleness; for though men are apt to complain of the shortness, yet many of them find it as a burden in their hands; they know not how to dispose of, or what to make of it; it is something they have little use for, and know not what to do with, but let it slip from them, without observation, in careless neglect. So much time is spent in sleep, which is so much time lost; since, when it was passing, we had no perception of the same, and so could not count it in our thoughts. So much time is spent in vain thoughts and impertinent digressions of the mind, and so the measure of that time is also lost. Again, so much time is spent in heart-dividing cares and vexing fears, which is a portion of time of so little value, that men are content to bury it in deep sleep. And, when all these deductions are made, how short is man's time on earth! And how little, or nothing, in comparison of eternity! And yet in the ordinary computation of the threescore or fourscore years of a man's life, all these parts of time ordinarily come into the reckoning, and swell the account.

Others again, though they see themselves nearer the end of time, yet they reckon not upon being nearer eternity. There cannot be a greater stupidity than this; since it is certain there can be no medium betwixt time and eternity: for, as soon as we are carried down to the end of time, we launch out into the ocean of boundless eternity. And yet men, whose

thoughts have been wholly possessed with time and its enjoyments, cannot bring their minds to think on eternity. Hence, though they see themselves near the end of time, they never think on eternity. Though one would think, that, the nearer we draw to the conclusion of time, we should be the more awakened with the lively views of eternity; yet it is not always so, but often it happens, that those who have been always in use to think that eternity is far off and at a distance, cannot be brought to think that it is near; which arises not so much from a senselessness of time, as a thoughtlessness of eternity.

Lord, teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. Time glides away swiftly, and passes on without delay. Every day brings us a step nearer to eternity; and it is but a small part of it that now remains to do all that is to be done, or can be done, for an eternal life and happiness. And are we redeeming it for this end? Is this the use we are making of our time? Are we living in it, or only spending and consuming it away? We are flying away like shadows, and fade like the flowers of the field, and every hour of that time must be precious, on which depends a blessed eternity, or which is intended as a preparation for the same: and do we so value and improve it? Are we casting up daily our accounts with God, and keeping matters clear between him and our souls? Are we busy in doing the best things, in the best manner we can, through grace? *Oh that there were such a heart in us! Oh that we knew the things that belong to our peace, before they be hid from our eyes!*

REV. W. CRAWFORD.

On Scepticism.

THE immortality of the soul is a thing which so deeply concerns, so infinitely imports us, that we must have utterly lost our feeling, to be altogether cold and remiss in our inquiries about it. And all our actions or designs ought to bend so very different a way, according as we are either encouraged or forbidden, to embrace the hope of eternal rewards, that it is impossible for us to proceed with judgment and discretion, otherwise than as we keep this point always in view, which ought to be our ruling object, and final aim.

It is vain for men to turn aside their

thoughts from this eternity which awaits them, as if they were able to destroy it by denying it a place in their imagination: it subsists in spite of them; it advanceth unobserved; and death, which is to draw the curtain from it, will in a short time infallibly reduce them to the dreadful necessity of being for ever nothing, or for ever miserable.

We have here a doubt of the most affrighting consequence, and which, therefore, to entertain may be well esteemed the most grievous of misfortunes: but, at the same time, it is our indispensable duty not to lie under it, without struggling for deliverance.

He then who doubts, and yet seeks not to be resolved, is equally unhappy and unjust: but if withal he appears easy and composed, if he freely declares his indifference, nay, if he takes a vanity in professing it, and seems to make this most deplorable condition the subject of his pleasure and joy, I have not words to fix a name on so extravagant a creature. Where is the very possibility of entering into these thoughts and resolutions? What delight is there in finding oneself encompassed with impenetrable darkness? Or what consolation in despairing for ever of a comforter?

To sit down with some sort of acquiescence under so fatal an ignorance, is a thing unaccountable beyond all expression; and they who live with such a disposition, ought to be made sensible of its absurdity and stupidity, by having their inward reflections laid open to them, that they may grow wise by the prospect of their own folly. For behold how men are wont to reason, while they obstinately remain thus ignorant of what they are, and refuse all methods of instruction and illumination.

'Who has sent me into the world I know not: what the world is I know not, nor what I am myself. I am under an astonishing and terrifying ignorance of all things. I know not what my body is, what my senses, or my soul: this very part of me which thinks what I speak, which reflects upon every thing else, and even upon itself, yet is as mere a stranger to its own nature, as the dullest thing I carry about me. I behold these frightful spaces of the universe with which I am encompassed, and I find myself chained to one little corner of that vast extent, without understanding why I am placed in this

seat, rather than in any other; or why this moment of time given me to live, was assigned rather at such a point, than any other of the whole eternity which was before me, or of all that which is to come after me. I see nothing but infinities on all sides, which devour and swallow me up like an atom, or like a shadow, which endures but a single instant, and is never to return. The sum of my knowledge is, that I must shortly die: but that which I am most ignorant of is this very death, which I feel unable to decline.

'As I know not whence I came, so I know not whither I go; only this I know, that at my departure out of the world, I must either fall for ever into nothing, or into the hands of an incensed God, without being capable of deciding, which of these two conditions shall eternally be my portion. Such is my state, full of weakness, obscurity, and wretchedness. And from all this I conclude, that I ought, therefore, to pass all the days of my life without considering what is hereafter to befall me; and that I have nothing to do, but to follow my inclinations without reflection or disquiet, in doing all that, which, if what men say of a miserable eternity prove true, will infallibly plunge me into it. It is possible I might find some light to clear up my doubts; but I shall not take a minute's pains, nor stir one foot in search of it. On the contrary, I am resolved to treat those with scorn and derision who labour in this inquiry and care; and, so to run without fear or foresight, upon the trial of the grand event; permitting myself to be led softly on to death, utterly uncertain as to the eternal issue of my future condition.'

In earnest, it is a glory to religion to have so unreasonable men for its professed enemies; and their opposition is of so little danger, that it serves to illustrate the principal truths which our religion teaches. For the main scope of Christian faith is to establish those two principles, the corruption of nature and the redemption by Jesus Christ. And these opposers, if they are of no use towards demonstrating the truth of the redemption, by the sanctity of their lives, yet are at least admirably useful in showing the corruption of nature, by so unnatural sentiments and suggestions.

Nothing is so important to any man as his own estate and condition; nothing so

great, so amazing, as eternity. If, therefore, we find persons indifferent to the loss of their being, and to the danger of endless misery, it is impossible that this temper should be natural. They are quite other men in all other regards, they fear the smallest inconveniences, they see them as they approach, and feel them if they arrive, and he who passeth days and nights in chagrin or despair, for the loss of an employment, or for some imaginary blemish in his honour, is the very same mortal who knows that he must lose all by death, and yet remains without disquiet, resentment or emotion. This wonderful insensibility, with respect to things of the most fatal consequence, in a heart so nicely sensible of the meanest trifles, is an astonishing prodigy, and unintelligible enchantment, a supernatural blindness and infatuation.

A man in a close dungeon, who knows not whether sentence of death has passed upon him, who is allowed but one hour's space to inform himself concerning it, and that one hour sufficient, in case it have passed, to obtain its reverse, would act contrary to nature and sense, should he make use of this hour not to procure information, but to pursue his vanity or sport. And yet such is the condition of the persons whom we are now describing; only with this difference, that the evils with which they are every moment threatened, do infinitely surpass the bare loss of life, and that transient punishment which the prisoner is supposed to apprehend: yet they run thoughtless upon the precipice, having only cast a veil over their eyes, to hinder them from discerning it, and divert themselves with the officiousness of such as charitably warn them of their danger.

Thus not the zeal alone of those who heartily seek God, demonstrates the truth of religion, but likewise the blindness of those who utterly forbear to seek him, and who pass their days under so horrible a neglect. There must needs be a strange turn and revolution in human nature, before men can submit to such a condition, much more ere they can applaud and value themselves upon it. For supposing them to have obtained an absolute certainty, that there was no fear after death, but of falling into nothing, ought not this to be the subject rather of despair than of jollity? And is it not, therefore, the highest pitch of senseless extravagance, while we want

the certainty, to glory in our doubt and distrust?

And yet, after all, it is too visible, that man has so far declined from his original nature and as it were departed from himself, to nourish in his heart a secret seed-plot of joy, springing up from these libertine reflections. This brutal ease or indolence, between the fear of hell, and annihilation, carries somewhat so tempting in it, that not only those who have the misfortune to be sceptically inclined, but even those who cannot unsettle their judgment, do yet esteem it reputable to take up a counterfeit diffidence. For we may observe the largest part of the herd to be of this latter kind, false pretenders to infidelity, and mere hypocrites in atheism. There are persons whom we have heard declare, that the gentel way of the world consists in thus acting the bravo. This is that which they term throwing off the yoke, and which the greater number of them profess, not so much out of opinion, as out of gallantry and complaisance.

Yet, if they have the least reserve of common sense, it will not be difficult to make them apprehend how miserably they abuse themselves, by laying so false a foundation of applause and esteem. For this is not the way to raise a character, even with worldly men, who, as they are able to pass a shrewd judgment on things, so they easily discern that the only method of succeeding in our temporal affairs, is to prove ourselves honest, faithful, prudent, and capable of advancing the interest of our friends, because men naturally love nothing but that which some way contributes to their use and benefit. But now what benefit can we any way derive from hearing a man confess that he has eased himself of the burden of religion; that he believes no God, as the witness and inspector of his conduct; that he considers himself as absolute master of what he does, and accountable for it only to his own mind? Will he fancy that we shall be hence induced to repose a greater degree of confidence in him hereafter? or to depend on his comfort, his advice, or assistance, in the necessities of life? Can he imagine us to take any great delight or complacency when he tells us, that he doubts whether our very soul be anything more than a little wind and smoke? Nay, when he tells it us with an air of assurance, and a voice that testifies the contentment

of his heart? Is this a thing to be spoken of with pleasantry? or ought it not rather to be lamented with the deepest sadness, as the most melancholy reflection that can strike our thoughts?

If they would compose themselves to serious consideration, they must perceive the method in which they are engaged to be so very ill chosen, so repugnant to gentility, and so remote even from that good air and grace which they pursue, that, on the contrary, nothing can more effectually expose them to the contempt and aversion of mankind, or mark them out for persons defective in parts and judgment. And, indeed, should we demand from them an account of their sentiments, and the reasons which they have to entertain this suspicion in religious matters, what they offer would appear so miserably weak and trifling, as rather to confirm us in our belief. This is no more than what one of their own fraternity told them, with great smartness, on such an occasion. 'If you continue (says he) to dispute at this rate, you will infallibly make me a Christian.' And the gentleman was in the right; for who would not tremble to find himself embarked in the same cause, with so forlorn, so despicable companions?

And thus it is evident, that they who wear no more than the outward mask of these principles, are the most unhappy counterfeits in the world; inasmuch as they are obliged to put a continual force and constraint on their genius, only that they may render themselves the most impertinent of all men living.

If they are heartily and sincerely troubled at their want of light, let them not dissemble the disease. Such a confession could not be reputed shameful; for there really is no shame, but in being shameless. Nothing betrays so much weakness of soul, as not to apprehend the misery of man, while living without God in the world: nothing is a surer token of extreme baseness of spirit, than not to hope for the reality of external promises: no man is so stigmatised a coward, as he that acts the bravo against heaven. Let them therefore leave these impieties to those who are born with so unhappy a judgment, as to be capable of entertaining them in earnest. If they cannot be Christian men, let them, however, be men of honour: and let them, in conclusion, acknowledge, that there are

but two sorts of persons, who deserve to be styled reasonable, either those who serve God with all their heart, because they know him; or those who seek him with all their heart, because as yet they know him not.

If then there are persons who sincerely inquire after God, and who being truly sensible of their misery, affectionately desire to be rescued from it; it is to these alone that we can in justice afford our labour and service, for their direction in finding out that light of which they feel the want.

PASCAL.

Unbelief the Source of all Evil.

THE strength of the whole body of sin lies in unbelief. There is no mastering of a sinner, while unbelief is in power; this will carry all arguments away (whether they be from law or gospel) that are pressed upon him. It is a sin that doth keep the field, one of the last of all others; that which the sinner is last convinced of, and the saint ordinarily last conqueror of. It is one of the chief strengths and fastnesses into which the devil retreats when other sins are routed. O how often do we hear a poor sinner confess and bewail other sins he hath lived in formerly, but will not hearken yet to the offer of mercy in Christ! bid him believe on Christ, and he shall be saved (which was the doctrine Paul and Silas preached to the trembling jailer, Acts xvi. 31), alas! he dares not, he will not, you can hardly persuade him it is his duty to do so. The devil hath now betaken himself to this city of gates and bars, where he stands upon his guard; and the more strongly to fortify himself in it, he hath the most specious pretences for it of any other sin. It is a sin that he makes the humbled soul commit, out of a fear of sinning; and so stabs the good name of God, for fear of dishonouring him by a presumptuous faith. Indeed it is a sin by which Satan intends to put the greatest scorn upon God, and unfold all his malice against him at once. It is by faith that the saints have all obtained a good report; yea, it is by the saints' faith that God hath a good report in the world; and by unbelief, the devil doth his worst to raise an evil report of God in the world; as if he were not what his own promise, and his saints' faith, witness him to be. There are two sins that claim a pre-eminence in hell, hypocrisy and unbelief; and

therefore other sinners are threatened *to have their portion with hypocrites*, Matt. xxiv. 51, and *with unbelievers*, Luke xii. 46. But of the two, unbelief is the greatest, and that which may with an emphasis be called, above this or any other, *the damning sin*. *He that believes not is condemned already*, John iii. 18. The Jews are said *to be shut up in unbelief*, Rom. xi. 32. A surer prison the devil cannot keep a sinner in. Faith shuts the soul up in the promise of life and happiness, as God shut Noah into the ark. It is said, *the Lord shut him in*, Gen. vii. 16: thus faith shuts the soul up in Christ, and the ark of his covenant, from all fear of danger; and on the contrary, unbelief shuts a soul up in guilt and wrath, that there is no possibility of escaping damnation for an unbeliever. As our salvation is attributed to faith, rather than to other graces, though none of these are wanting in a saved person; so sinners' ruin is attributed to their unbelief, though other sins are found with it: the Spirit of God passeth over the Jews' hypocrisy, murmuring, rebellion, and lays their destruction at the door of this one sin of unbelief, *they could not enter in because of unbelief*, Heb. iii. 19. O sinners (you who live under the Gospel I mean), if you perish, know beforehand what is your undoing, it is your unbelief that does it.

GURNALL.

The Superiority that a Believer has over a Sceptic.

WHAT a superiority hath a believer over a sceptic! What a superiority at the tribunal of authority! at the tribunal of interest! at the tribunal of history! at the tribunal of conscience! at the tribunal of reason! at the tribunal of scepticism itself! From each of these it may be truly pronounced, *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*.

1. The believer is superior at the tribunal of authority. The sceptic objecteth against the believer the examples of some few nations, who, it is said, live without religion; and those of some philosophers, whose pretended atheism hath rendered them famous. The believer replieth to the sceptic, by urging his well grounded suspicions in regard to those historians, and travellers, who have published such examples, and, opposing authority against authority, in favour of the grand leading

principles of religion, he allegeth the unanimous consent of the whole known world.

2. At the tribunal of interest. The sceptic resisteth the believer by arguing the constraint which religion continually putteth on mankind; the pleasure of pursuing every wish without being terrified with the idea of a formidable witness of our actions, or a future account of our conduct. The believer resisteth the sceptic, by arguing the benefit of society, which would be entirely subverted, if infidels could effect their dreadful design of demolishing those bulwarks which religion builds. He urgeth the interest of each individual, who, in those periods of life, in which he is disgusted with the world; in those, in which he is exposed to catastrophes of glory and fortune; above all, in the period of death, hath no refuge from despair, if the hopes, that religion affords, be groundless.

3. At the tribunal of history. The sceptic objects to the believer the impossibility of obtaining demonstration, properly so called, of distant facts. The believer urgeth on the infidels his own acquiescence in the evidence of events, as ancient as those, the distance of which is objected; and, turning his own weapons against him, he demonstrates to him, that reasons, still stronger than those, which constrain the sceptic to admit other events, such as number of witnesses, unanimity of historians, sacrifices made to certify the testimony, and a thousand more similar proofs, ought to engage him to believe the facts on which religion is founded.

4. At the tribunal of conscience. The infidel opposeth his own experience to the believer, and boasts of having shaken off the yoke of this tyrant. The believer replies by relating the experiences of the most celebrated sceptics, and, using the infidel himself for a demonstration of the truths, which he pretends to subvert, reproaches him with feeling, in spite of himself, the remorse of that conscience, from which he affects to have freed himself; he proves that it awakes when lightning flashes, when thunders roll in the air, when the messengers of death approach to execute their terrible ministry.

5. At the tribunal of reason. The sceptic objects to the believer, that religion demands the sacrifice of reason of its disciples: that it reveals abstruse doctrines, and incomprehensible mysteries;

and that it requires all to receive its decisions with an entire submission. The believer opposeth the infidel by arguing the infallibility of the Intelligence who revealed these doctrines to us. He proves to him that the best use that can be made of reason, is to renounce it in the sense in which revelation requireth its renunciation, so that reason never walks a path so safe, nor is ever elevated to a degree of honour so eminent, as when, ceasing to see with its own eyes, it seeth only with the eyes of the infallible God.

6. The believer triumphs over the infidel at the tribunal of scepticism itself. One single degree of probability in the system of the believer, in our opinion, disconcerts and confounds the system of the sceptic; at least it ought to embitter all the fancied sweets of infidelity. What satisfaction can a man of sense find in that boasted independence, which the system of infidelity procures, if there be the least shadow of a probability of its plunging him into endless misery? But this very man, who finds the evidences of religion too weak to induce a man of sense to controul his passions, during the momentary duration of this life, this very man finds the system of infidelity so evident, that it engageth him to dare that eternity of misery, which religion denounceth against the impenitent. What a contrast! The obstinate sceptic falls into a credulity, that would be unpardonable in a child. These fiery globes, that revolve over our heads with so much pomp and glory: these heavens, that *declare the glory of God*, Psal. xix. 1: that firmament, which *sheweth his handiwork*: these successions of seasons: that symmetry of body: these faculties of mind: the martyrs, who attest the truth of the facts, on which religion is founded: the miracles, that confirm the facts: that harmony between the prophecies and their accomplishment: and all the other numerous arguments, that establish the doctrine of the existence of God, and of the truth of revelation: all these, he pretends, cannot prove enough to engage him to render homage to a Supreme Being: and the few difficulties, which he objects to us; a few rash conjectures; a system of doubts and uncertainties, seem to him sufficiently conclusive to engage him to brave that adorable Being, and to expose himself to all the miseries that attend those who affront him.

We conclude, then, that our first proposition is sufficiently justified. Truth in general, the truths of religion in particular, have a light superior to all the glimmerings of error. *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

SAURIN.

The Madness of Infidelity.

IF a person that had a fair estate in reversion, which in all probability he would speedily be possessed of, and of which he might reasonably promise to himself a long and happy enjoyment, should be assured by some skilful physician, that in a very short time he would inevitably fall into a disease which would so totally deprive him of his understanding and memory, that he would lose the knowledge of all things without him, nay, all consciousness and sense of his own person and being: if, I say, upon a certain belief of this indication, the man should appear overjoyed at the news, and be mightily transported with the discovery and expectation, would not all that saw him be astonished at such behaviour? Would they not be forward to conclude, that the distemper had seized him already, and even then the miserable creature was become a mere fool and an idiot? Now the carriage of our atheists is infinitely more amazing than this; no dotage so infatuate, no phrensy so extravagant as theirs. They have been educated in a religion that instructed them in the knowledge of a Supreme Being; a Spirit most excellently glorious, superlatively powerful, and wise, and good, Creator of all things out of nothing; that hath endued the sons of men, his peculiar favourites, with a rational spirit, and hath placed them as spectators in this noble theatre of the world, to view and applaud these glorious scenes of earth and heaven, the workmanship of his hands; that hath furnished them in general with a sufficient store of all things, either necessary or convenient for life; and particularly to such as fear and obey him, hath promised a supply of all wants, a deliverance and protection from all dangers; that they that seek him shall want no manner of thing that is good; who, besides his munificence to them in this life, *hath so loved them, that he gave his only-begotten Son, the express image of his substance*, and partaker of his eternal nature and glory, to bring life and immortality to light, and to

tender them to mankind upon fair and gracious terms ; that if they submit to his easy yoke and light burden, and observe his commandments, which are not grievous, he then gives them the promise of eternal salvation ; he hath reserved for them in heaven, *an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away* ; he hath prepared for them an unspeakable, unconceivable perfection of joy and bliss, things that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man*. What a delightful ravishing hypothesis of religion is this ! And in this religion they have had their education. Now let us suppose some great professor in atheism to suggest to some of these men, that all this is mere dream and imposture ; that there is no such excellent Being as they suppose, that created and preserves them ; that all about them is dark and senseless matter, driven on by the blind impulses of fatality and fortune ; that men first sprung up, like mushrooms, out of the mud and slime of the earth ; and that all their thoughts, and the whole of what they call soul, are only the various action and repercussion of small particulars of matter, kept a-while a moving by some mechanism and clock-work, which finally must cease and perish by death. If it be true then (as we daily find it is) that men listen with complacency to these horrid suggestions ; if they let go their hope of everlasting life with willingness and joy ; if they entertain the thoughts of final perdition with exultation and triumph ; ought they not to be esteemed most notorious fools, even destitute of common sense, and abandoned to a callousness and numbness of soul ?

What then ! Is heaven itself, with its pleasures for evermore, to be parted with so unconcernedly ? Is a crown of righteousness, a crown of life, to be surrendered with laughter ? Is *an exceeding and eternal weight of glory* too light in the balance against the hopeless death of the atheist, and utter extinction ! !

DR. BENTLEY.

The Sinner bent on indulging his appetites often Reasons himself into Infidelity.

A GREAT many persons, before they proceed upon an act of known transgression, do expressly state to themselves the question, whether religion be true or not ;

and in order to get at the object of their desire, (for the real matter to be determined is, whether they shall have their desire gratified or not,) in order, I say, to get at the pleasure in some cases ; or, in other cases, the point of interest, upon which they have set their hearts, they choose to decide, and they do in fact decide with themselves, that these things are not so certain, as to be a reason for them to give up the pleasure which lies before them, or the advantage, which is now, and which may never be again, in their power to compass. This conclusion does actually take place, and, at various times, must almost necessarily take place, in the minds of men of bad morals. And now remark the effect which it has upon their thoughts afterwards. When they come at another future time to reflect upon religion, they reflect upon it as upon what they had before adjudged to be unfounded, and too uncertain to be acted upon, or to be depended upon : and reflections, accompanied with this adverse and unfavourable impression, naturally lead to infidelity. Herein, therefore, is seen the fallacious operation of sin ; first, in the circumstances under which men form their opinion and their conclusions concerning religion ; and, secondly, in the effect, which conclusions, which doubts so formed, have upon their judgment afterwards. First, what is the situation of mind in which they decide concerning religion ? and what can be expected from such a situation ? Some magnified and alluring pleasure has stirred their desires and passions. It cannot be enjoyed without sin. Here is religion, denouncing and forbidding it on one side : there is opportunity, drawing and pulling on the other. With this drag and bias upon their thoughts, they pronounce and decide concerning the most important of all subjects, and of all questions. If they should determine for the truth and reality of religion, they must sit down disappointed of a gratification, upon which they had set their hearts, and of using an opportunity which may never come again. Nevertheless they must determine one way or other. And this process, viz. a similar deliberation and a similar conclusion, is renewed and repeated, as often as occasions of sin offer. The effect, at length, is a settled persuasion against religion ; for what is it, in persons who proceed in this manner, which rests and dwells upon their

memories? What is it which gives to their judgment its turn and bias? It is these occasional decisions often repeated; which decisions have the same power and influence over the man's after-opinion, as if they had been made ever so impartially, or ever so correctly: whereas, in fact, they are made under circumstances which exclude, almost, the possibility of their being made with fairness, and with sufficient inquiry. Men decide under the power and influence of sinful temptation: but, having decided, the decision is afterwards remembered by them, and grows into a settled and habitual opinion, as much as if they had proceeded in it without any bias or prejudice whatever.

The extent to which this cause acts, that is, the numbers who are included in its influence, will be further known by the following observation. I have said, that sinners oftentimes *expressly* state to themselves the question, whether religion be true or not; and that they state to themselves this question, at the time when they are about to enter upon some act of sin, which religion condemns; and I believe the case so to be. I believe that this statement is often expressly made, and in the manner which I have represented. But there is also a tacit rejection of religion, which has nearly the same effect. Whenever a man deliberately ventures upon an action which he knows that religion prohibits, he tacitly rejects religion. There may not pass in his thoughts every step which we have described, nor may he come expressly to the conclusion; but he acts upon the conclusion, he practically adopts it. And the doing so will alienate his mind from religion, as surely, almost, as if he had formally argued himself into an opinion of its untruth. The effect of sin is necessarily, and highly, and in all cases, adverse to the production and existence of religious faith. Real difficulties are doubled and trebled, when they fall in with vicious propensities; imaginary difficulties are readily started. Vice is wonderfully acute in discovering reasons on its own side. This may be said of all kinds of vice; but, I think, it more particularly holds good of what are called licentious vices, that is, of vices of debauchery; for sins of debauchery have a tendency, which other species of sin have not so directly, to unsettle and weaken the powers of the understanding, as well as, in a greater de-

gree, I think, than other vices, to render the heart thoroughly corrupt. In a mind so wholly depraved, the impression of any argument, relating to a moral or religious subject, is faint, and slight, and transitory. To a vitiated palate no meat has its right taste; with a debauched mind no reasoning has its proper influence.

DR. PALEY.

The easy transition from Infidelity to Superstition.

WE know the transition is very easy from superstition to infidelity; and I should be glad to know, why it should not be as easy from infidelity to superstition; since we are very apt to run from one extreme to another. The present declared scheme of deism is this; that people must be left to collect every one a religion for himself independently, according as their ignorance, short-sightedness, or passions, which to be sure they will call their reason, shall mislead. Now as the best king that ever sat on the throne could not wish a nation more happiness than that the precepts of the Gospel should be universally obeyed, and the doctrines of it, those strong incentives to virtue, universally believed through his kingdom; so the most ill-natured being, the most accursed spirit, could not wish a nation greater confusion than their scheme, so big with evils, would occasion if it should take place. The consequence of which would be, that as soon as the people opened their eyes, and saw the numerous train of miseries that it had plunged them into, how an unrestrained freedom of thought had every where produced a correspondent freedom in action, they would conceive an utter abhorrence of what had been the source of so many evils; and resolved to fly precipitately through an inveterate, undistinguishing hatred, as far as ever they could get from infidelity (the farther, they would think, the better) they would run into the very jaws of popery. They might indeed rove about for a while pleased in the mazes of error; but weary of so many crude notions, weary of wandering, ever *seeking rest, and finding none*, they might be tempted at last to take up with a pretended infallible guide. Thus this nation would tread in a round of error. The cant and enthusiasm in the time of the grand rebellion begat in the next generation an abandoned profaneness and im-

morality, which was productive of infidelity, which hath been growing ever since ; and infidelity may at last, if it goes on, produce enthusiasm, or something worse. We dance in a circle, and may end just in the same point where we set out.

Be this as it will ; it is but too melancholy a prospect that the youth of the nation are almost universally poisoned in their principles, and those who should be the flower of the nation, are, alas ! but too generally become the very dregs of it. Formerly indeed, as well as now, the sallies of youthful blood would hurry them into several extravagances and irregularities ; yet still their principles continued sound and uncorrupt, which would exert themselves as soon as the youthful ferment abated. But now they take care to corrupt their principles first ; which ever after shuts up all avenues to a reformation. Hence that flagrant contempt of all authority divine and human. Hence that avowed disregard to all subordination of servants to their masters, children to their parents, subjects to their king. And why should those wonder at this, who have taken no care to cultivate a due use of the greatest regard, the foundation of all the rest, that of a creature to his Creator ?

SEED.

The real Character of a lukewarm Professor.

LET us consider lukewarmness, as it relates to practice. Now hot, and cold, and lukewarm, must signify the different tempers of men's minds, and relate to our inward sense and passions. To be cold, is to have no sense at all of God or religion, no stirrings or motions of our affections that way. To be hot, is to have a lively and vigorous sense of God, a heat and fervour of spirit in all acts of devotion, a restless and unwearied zeal in doing good. Lukewarmness is between both these : such a man retains some sense of God, and of religion, and therefore is not stark cold. He observes the public acts of worship, and possibly is not a perfect stranger to closet devotions. He may abstain from gross immoralities, and do many good things ; but he feels very little of his religion, has none of those passions which belong to a spiritual life, and feels none of the pleasures of it. His religion is like the motion of a machine, without an inward principle of nature and life : he must do something to quiet his

conscience ; and he does it, not because he likes it, but because it gives him ease.

It is true our passions are such uncertain and changeable things, that we must not always judge of ourselves by sensible heats and transports. With respect to the passionate parts of religion, no man is always the same ; and good men differ from each other, according to their natural frame and temper. Some men's passions are more easily fired, more disposed to rapture and ecstasy ; others have as true and quick a sense, but a more calm and equal motion ; and art may sometimes counterfeit nature, and a disease may outdo it, as the burning of a fever does the natural and vital heat : and therefore I shall not refer the judgment of this matter wholly to the sensible motions of passion ; for good men may sometimes in their devotions find very little of it, and lukewarm formalists may feel some accidental heats and transports. But there are more certain indications of this which cannot deceive us.

A lukewarm formalist makes as little religion as may be serve the turn ; and thus it must be, when religion is a mere task, and not a principle of life. The great inquiry of such men is, what strict duty requires of them ; how much they are bound to do by express and positive laws ? How often they must pray, and go to church, and hear the word of God read and preached, and receive the Holy Sacrament ? And how seldom they may do all this without sin ? And because they do not find in Scripture any positive determination of these matters, they choose for themselves, and make as little serve as will quiet their consciences, (which are usually very reasonable) and avoid the scandal and censure of the world. They cry out loudly against those who impose difficult and unreasonable tasks, and say very truly, that God never intended to make religion our burden : and it seems they know no way to make it easy, but to take a little of it. Now, wherever this is found, it is a certain demonstration of a lukewarm formalist, who has no natural warmth or heat, no vital sense of religion. Nature never desires to be excused ; strength and appetite are the only measures it knows. Our Saviour has prescribed no certain measure to our devotions, but the different degrees of a new and spiritual life will do this. Then religion grows burdensome, when we ex-

tend the exercise of our devotion beyond the life and vigour of it. But a truly devout mind, according to the degrees and strength of its devotion, will as certainly call upon us for the returns of duty, as an empty stomach calls for meat: and, therefore, when the exact proportions of duty must be prescribed, and the less the better, this is not nature and life, but a counterfeit imitation. Such men have so much sense left, as to know that they ought to serve God; but have no principle of spiritual life and sense to serve him with.

DR. W. SHERLOCK.

On reproachful epithets directed against Religious Persons.

A THOUGHTFUL judge of sentiments, books, and men, will often find reason to regret that the language of censure is so easy and so undefined. It costs no labour, and needs no intellect, to pronounce the words foolish, stupid, dull, odious, absurd, ridiculous. The weakest or most uncultivated mind may therefore gratify its vanity, laziness, and malice, all at once, by a prompt application of vague condemnatory words, where a wise and liberal man would not feel himself warranted to pronounce without the most deliberate consideration; and where such consideration might perhaps terminate in applause. Thus the most excellent performances, whether in the department of thinking or of action, might be consigned to contempt, (if there were no better judges,) on the authority of those who could not even understand them. A man who wishes some decency and sense to prevail in the circulation of opinions, will do well, when he hears these decisions of ignorant arrogance, to call for a precise explication of the manner in which the terms apply to the subject.

There is a competent number of words for this use of cheap censure; but though a man deems himself to be giving no mean proof of sagacity in this confident readiness to condemn, even with this impotence of language, he may however have a certain consciousness that there is, in some other minds, a keen dexterity which would find expressions to bite harder than the words dull, stupid, and ridiculous, which he is repeating many times to compensate for the incapacity of hitting off the right thing at once. These vague epithets describe

nothing, discriminate nothing; they express no species, are as applicable to ten thousand things as to this one; and he has before employed them on a numberless diversity of subjects. But he can perceive that censure or contempt has the smartest effect, when its expressions have an appropriate peculiarity, which adapts them more precisely to the present subject than to another, and he is therefore not quite satisfied with the expressions which say 'about it and about it,' but do not say the thing itself; which rather shew his mischievous will than prove his mischievous power. He wants words and phrases which would make the edge of his clumsy meaning fall just where it ought. Yes, he wants words; for his meaning is sharp, he knows, if only the words would come. Discriminative censure must be conveyed either in a sentence which expresses some marked and acute turn of thought, instead of simply applying an epithet, or in an epithet so specifically appropriate, that the single word is sufficient to fix the condemnation by the mere precision with which it describes. But as the censorer perhaps cannot succeed in either of these ways, he is willing to seek some other resource. And he may often find it in cant terms, which have a more spiteful force, and seem to have more particularity of meaning, than plain common words, without needing any shrewdness for their application. Each of these is supposed to denominate some one class or character of scorned or reprobated things, but leaves it so imperfectly defined, that dull malice may venture to assign to the class any thing which it would desire to throw under the odium of the denomination. Such words serve for a mode of collective execution, somewhat like the vessels which, in a season of outrage in a neighbouring country, received a promiscuous crowd of reputed criminals, of unexamined and dubious similarity, and were then sunk in the flood. You cannot wonder that such compendious words of decision, which can give quick vent to crude impatient censure, emit plenty of antipathy in a few syllables, and save the condemner the difficulty of telling exactly what he wants to mean, should have had an extensive circulation.

Puritan was, doubtless, welcomed as a term of most lucky invention when it began to be applied in contempt to a class

of men, of whom the world was not worthy. Its peculiarity gave it almost such an advantage as that of a proper name, among the lumber of common words by which they were described and reviled; while yet it meant any thing, every thing, which the vain world disliked in the devout character. To the more sluggish it saved, and to the more loquacious it relieved, the labour of endless repeating, 'demure rogues,' 'sanctimonious pretenders,' 'formal hypocrites.'

This term has long since lost its point, and is almost forgotten; but some word of a similar cast was indispensably necessary to the vulgar of both kinds. The vain and malignant spirit which had decried the elevated piety of the Puritans, sought about (as Milton describes the wicked one in Paradise) for some convenient form in which it might again come forth to hiss at zealous Christianity, and in another lucky moment fell on the term *Methodist*. If there is no sense in the word, as now applied, there seems however to be a great deal of aptitude and execution. It has the advantage of being comprehensive as a general denomination, and yet opprobrious as a special badge, for every thing that ignorance and folly may mistake for fanaticism, or that malice may wilfully assign to it. Whenever a grave formalist feels it his duty to sneer at those operations of religion on the passions, which he never felt, he has only to call them *methodistical*; and notwithstanding that the word is both so trite and so vague, he feels as if he had uttered a good pungent thing. There is satiric smartness in the word, though there be none in the man. In default of keen faculty in the mind, it is delightful thus to find something that will do as well, ready bottled up in odd terms. It is not less convenient to a profligate, or a coxcomb, whose propriety of character is to be supported by laughing indiscriminately at religion in every form; the one, to evince that his courage is not sapped by conscience; the other, to make the best advantage of his instinct of catching at impiety as a substitute for sense. The word *methodism* so readily sets aside all religion as superstitious folly, that they pronounce it with an air as if no more needed to be said. Such terms have a pleasant facility of throwing away the matter in question to scorn, without any trouble of making a definite intelligible

charge-of extravagance or delusion, and attempting to prove it.

FOSTER.

Opposition of the Natural Man to God.

WE are enemies to God's sovereignty in setting up self.

Man imagined, at first, that by eating the forbidden fruit he should have such a knowledge of good and evil, as to be independent upon God, and bottomed upon himself, and his own will.

This self in us is properly the old Adam, the true offspring of the first corrupted man. This is the great antichrist, the great antigod in us, which sits in the heart, the temple of God, and would be adored as God, would be the chiefest, as the highest end. This is the great usurper in the world, for it invades the right of God; it is the most direct compliance and likeness to the devil, whose actions centre wholly in malicious self-will. In this respect I suppose the devil is called *the god of this world*, because he acts so as if the world should only serve his ends.

Self is the centre of many men's religious actions; while God seems to be the object, self is the end; *Did you fast unto me?* Zech. vii. 5.

This being the motive of hypocrisy, makes it more idolatry, and so more odious to God; other sins subject only the creature to self, but this subjects the soul, and even God himself to corrupt self. Self-love leads the van, *Men shall be lovers of their own selves*, 2 Tim. iii. 2, of that black regiment which marches behind it, and is concluded with the *having a form of godliness, and denying the power of it*; and a denying the power of godliness, is a denying the sovereignty of God.

The righteousness a man would establish in opposition to God, is called a man's own; a righteousness of his own framing, that hath its rise only from himself, *going about to establish their own righteousness*, Rom. x. 3.

Sin and self are all one; what is called a *living in sin* in one place, is *living to self in another*, Rom. vi. 2. *That they which live should not live to themselves*, 2 Cor. v. 15. What a man serves, and directs all his projects, and the whole labour of his life to, that is his god and lord, and that is self.

All inferior things act for some superior as their immediate end: this order hath

nature constituted; the lesser animals are designed for the greater; the irrational for man, and man for something higher and nobler than himself; for all beings naturally should, in their several stations, tend to the service of the first Being. Now to make ourselves the end, and all other things to act for ourselves, is to make ourselves the Supreme Being, to deny any superior as the centre to which our actions should be directed, and usurp God's place, who alone being the Supreme Being, can be his own end: For if there were any thing higher and better than God, his own purity and goodness would cause him to act for that as more noble and worthy.

I appeal to you, whether you have not sometimes secret wishes, that you were in the place of God; for where there is a slavish fear of him, there must needs be such wishes, according to the degrees of fear; and so you have wished God undeified, that you might be advanced to the Godhead.

This some think to be the sin of the devils, affecting an independency on God by a proud reflection upon their own created excellency, and at least a delightful wish, if not an endeavour to make themselves the ultimate end of all their actions.

We are enemies to God's sovereignty in setting up the world.

When we place this in our heart, God's proper seat and chair, we deprive God of his propriety, and do him the greatest wrong, in giving the possession of his right to another. The Apostle gives covetousness no better title than that of idolatry, Col. iii. 5. And the Psalmist puts the atheist's cap upon the oppressor's head, *Who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord*, Psal. xiv. 4. What we make the chief object of our desires, is to us in the place of God. The poor Indians made a very natural and rational consequence, that gold was the Spaniards' God, because they hunted so greedily after it. This is an intolerable dethroning of God, to make that which is God's footstool to climb up into his throne; to bow down to an atom, a little dust and mud of the world, a drop out of the ocean; to set that in thy heart, which God hath made even below thyself, and put under thy feet; and to make that which thou tramplest upon, to tread down the right God hath to thy heart. Alas! who serves God with that care, and with that spirit that he serves the world with?

We are enemies to God's sovereignty in setting up sensual pleasures.

Love is a commanding affection, and gives the object a power over us; what we chiefly love, we readily obey. Now men are said to be *φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι*, 2 Tim. iii. 4. A glutton's belly is said to be his god, because his projects and affections are devoted to the satisfaction of that; and he lays in not for the service of God, but a magazine for lust. If you preferred some honourable thing which might perfect your natures, as learning, wisdom, moral virtues; though this were an indignity to be censured by the judge of all the world, yet it would be more tolerable; but to consecrate your heart and time to a sordid voluptuousness, and feed it with the cream of your strength, this is an inexcusable contempt, to pay a quick and lively service to an effeminate delight, which is only due to the Supreme Lord.

Doth not that man dethrone God, and hate him that will be under the command of a swinish pleasure; and make that the supreme end of his life and actions, rather than to be under the righteous government of God? The greatest excellency in the world is infinitely below our Creator; how much more must a bestial delight be below him which is so exceedingly disgraceful to, and below the nature of man? If we should love all the creatures in heaven and earth above God, it were more excusable than to degrade him in our affections beneath a brutish pleasure. Why doth any man court an ignoble sensuality with the displeasure of God, hell and damnation at the end of it, if he did not value it above God, as well as above his own soul?

The more sordid any thing is that we set up in the place of God, the greater is the despite done to him, Ezek. viii. 5. When the Prophet saw the image of jealousy at the gate, God tells him there were greater abominations than that, which are described, v. 10, *creeping things, and abominable beasts*; viz. the Egyptian idols.

The viler the thing is which possesses our heart, the greater slight is put upon God, and the greater the abomination.

We are enemies to God's sovereignty in setting up the devil.

Every sin is an election of the devil to be our Lord: if sin had a voice, it would give its suffrage for such a lord as would favour its interest.

As the Spirit dwells in a godly man to guide him, so doth the devil in a natural man, to direct him to evil; so that every sin is an effect of the devil's government: therefore sins are called his lusts, which natural men (who being the devil's children, are under his paternal government) fulfil and do with a resolute obedience: *his lusts you will do*, John viii. 44.

If we divide sins into spiritual and carnal, which division comprehends all sin; we shall find that in both we own the devil's authority, either in obeying his commands, or in conforming to his example. Some are said to be his lusts subjective, as he commits them; others dispositive, as he directs them. In spiritual he is an actor, in carnal a tempter. In carnal, men obey his commands; in spiritual, they model themselves according to his pattern. In the one they are his servants, to do his work; in the other his children, to partake of his nature. In the one we acknowledge him as our master; in the other we own him as our copy. In both we derogate from God's sovereignty over us, whom we are bound to imitate, as well as to obey. Every sin, in its own nature, is a communion of society with Belial, a fighting for the devil against God; it is the end of the act, though it be not the intention of the agent. Every sin is the devil's work, and therefore the choice of it is a preferring his service before God's. The sin of Saul, though in a small matter, and not in any natural, but positive command, is equalled to the sin of witchcraft, which, you know, is a covenanting with the devil to yield obedience to him, 1 Sam. xv. 23.

What a monstrous baseness is this, to advance an impure spirit in the place of infinite purity; to embrace the great ring-leader of rebellion, above the Contriver of our reconciliation; the only enemy God hath in the world, who drew all the rest into the faction against him, before him who is ready to pardon us upon our revolt from his adversary! To affect that destroyer above our preserver and benefactor; to esteem him as the exactest pattern and the greatest lord, as though he had created us, provided for us, and in mercy watched over all our days!

What a prodigious enmity is this, to offend God, to pleasure the devil, and injure our Creator, to gratify our adversary! Have we nothing to prefer before him, but

the deadliest enemy that both God and our souls have in the world? Must we side with our tormentor against our Preserver? Shall he which will fire us for ever, be valued above him, who would wipe all tears from our eyes? Oh! let us blush, if any spark of ingenuity be left; and let our hatred of God change its object, and boil up against ourselves for our abominable ingratitude. CHARNOCK.

Unwillingness of the Natural Man to know God.

IN recounting so many influences that operate on man, it is grievous to observe that the incomparably noblest of all, religion, is counteracted with a fatal success, by a perpetual conspiracy of almost all the rest, aided by the intrinsic predisposition of our nature, which yields itself with such consenting facility to every impression tending to estrange it still further from God.

It is a cause for wonder and sorrow, to see millions of rational creatures growing into their permanent habits, under the conforming efficacy of every thing which they ought to resist, and receiving no part of those habits from impressions of the Supreme Object. They are content that a narrow scene of a diminutive world, with its atoms and evils, should usurp, and deprave, and finish their education for immortality, while the Infinite Spirit is here, whose transforming companionship would exalt them into his sons, and, in defiance of a thousand malignant forces attempting to stamp on them an opposite image, lead them into eternity in his likeness. Oh! why is it so possible that this greatest Inhabitant of every place where men are living, should be the last whose society they seek, or of whose being constantly near them they feel the importance? Why is it possible to be surrounded with the intelligent Reality, which exists wherever we are, with attributes that are infinite, and not feel respecting all other things which may be attempting to impress on our minds and affect their character, as if they retained with difficulty their shadows of existence, and were continually on the point of vanishing into nothing? Why is this stupendous Intelligence so retired and silent, while present, over all the scenes of the earth, and in all the paths and abodes of men? Why does he keep his glory invisible behind the shades and

visions of the material world? Why does not this latent glory sometimes beam forth with such a manifestation as could never be forgotten, nor ever be remembered, without an emotion of religious fear? And why, in contempt of all that he has displayed to excite either fear or love, is it still possible for a rational creature so to live, that it must finally come to an interview with him in a character completed by the full assemblage of those acquisitions which have separately been disapproved by him through every stage of the accumulation? Why is it possible for feeble creatures to maintain their little dependent beings fortified and invincible in sin, amidst the presence of divine purity? Why does not the thought of such a Being strike through the mind with such intense antipathy to evil, as to blast with death every active principle that is beginning to pervert it, and render gradual additions of depravity, growing into the solidity of habit, as impossible as for perishable materials to be raised into structures amidst the fires of the last day? How is it possible to forget the solicitude which should accompany the consciousness that such a Being is continually darting upon us the beams of observant thought, (if we may apply such a term to Omniscience,) that we are exposed to the piercing inspection, compared to which the concentrated attention of all the beings in the universe besides, would be but as the powerless gaze of an infant? Why is faith, that faculty of spiritual apprehension, so absent, or so incomparably more slow and reluctant to receive a just perception of the grandest of its objects, than the senses are adapted to receive the impressions of theirs? While there is a Spirit pervading the universe with an infinite energy of being, why have the few particles of dust which enclose our spirits, the power to intercept all sensible communication with it, and to place them as in a vacuity, where the sacred Essence had been precluded or extinguished?

FOSTER.

Expostulation with him who forgets God.

THROUGH what defect or infatuation of mind have you been able, during so many years spent in the presence of a God, to continue even to this hour as clear of all marks and traces of any divine influences having operated on you, as if the Deity were but a poetical fiction, or an idol in

some temple of Asia? Evidently, as the immediate cause, through want of thought concerning him.

And why did you not think of him? Did a most solemn thought of him never *once* penetrate your soul, while admitting the proposition that there is such a Being? If it never did, what is reason, what is mind, what is man? If it did once, how could its effects stop there? How could a deep thought, on so singular and momentous a subject, fail to impose on the mind a permanent necessity of frequently recalling it; as some awful or magnificent spectacle will haunt you with a long recurrence of its image, even if the spectacle itself were seen no more?

Why did you not think of him? How could you estimate so meanly your mind with all its capacities, as to feel no regret that an endless series of trifles should seize, and occupy as their right, all your thoughts, and deny them both the liberty and the ambition of going on to the greatest Object? How, while called to the contemplations which absorb the spirits of heaven, could you be so patient of the task of counting the flies of a summer's day?

Why did you not think of him? You knew yourself to be in the hands of some Being from whose power you could not be withdrawn; was it not an equal defect of curiosity and prudence to indulge a careless confidence, that sought no acquaintance with his nature and his dispositions, nor ever anxiously inquired what conduct should be observed toward him, and what expectations might be entertained from him? You would have been alarmed to have felt yourself in the power of a mysterious stranger, of your own feeble species; but let the stranger be omnipotent, and you cared no more.

Why did you not think of him? One would deem that the thought of him must, to a serious mind, come second to almost every thought. The thought of virtue would suggest the thought of both a Lawgiver and a Rewarder; the thought of crime, of an Avenger; the thought of sorrow, of a Consoler; the thought of an inscrutable mystery, of an Intelligence that understands it; the thought of that ever-moving activity which prevails in the system of the universe, of a Supreme Agent; the thought of the human family, of a great Father; the thought of all being, of a Creator; the

thought of life, of a Preserver; and the thought of death, of an uncontrollable Disposer. By what dexterity, therefore, of irreligious caution, did you avoid precisely every track where the idea of him would have met you, or elude that idea if it came? And what must sound reason pronounce of a mind which, in the train of millions of thoughts, has wandered to all things under the sun, to all the permanent objects or vanishing appearances in the creation, but never fixed its thought on the Supreme Reality; never approached, like Moses, *to see this great sight*?

If it were a thing which we might be allowed to imagine, that the Divine Being were to manifest himself in some striking manner to the senses, as by some resplendent appearance at the midnight hour, or by rekindling on an elevated mountain the long extinguished fires of Sinai, and uttering voices from those fires; would he not compel from you an attention which you now refuse? Yes, you will say, he would then seize the mind with irresistible force, and religion would become its most absolute sentiment; but he only presents

himself to faith. Well, and is it a worthy reason for disregarding him, that you *only believe* him to be present and infinitely glorious? Is it the office of faith to veil or annihilate its object? Cannot you reflect that the grandest representation of a spiritual and divine Being to the senses would bear not only no proportion to his glory, but no relation to his nature, and could be adapted only to an inferior dispensation of religion, and to a people who, with the exception of a most extremely small number of men, had been totally untaught to carry their thoughts beyond the objects of sense? Are you not aware that such a representation would considerably tend to restrict you in your contemplation to a defined image, and therefore a most inadequate and subordinate idea of the Divine Being? While the idea admitted by faith, though less immediately striking, is capable of an illimitable expansion, by the addition of all that progressive thought can accumulate, under the continual certainty that all is still infinitely short of the reality.

FOSTER.

SECTION VI.—NATURE AND EFFECT OF SIN, WITH ITS REMEDY.

The True Nature of Sin.

THE true penitent adds to a just notion of the number of his sins, that of their *enormity*. Here, again, we must remove the prejudices that we have imbibed concerning the morality of Jesus Christ; for here also we have altered his doctrine, and taken the world for our casuist, the maxims of loose worldlings for our supreme law. We have reduced great crimes to a few principal enormous vices, which few people commit. There are but few murderers, but few assassins, but few highway robbers, strictly speaking: other sins, according to us, are frailties incidental to humanity, necessary consequences of human infirmity, and not evidences of a bad heart. But undeceive yourselves, lay aside the morality of the world, take the law of Jesus Christ for your judge, and consider the nature of things in their true point of light. For example, what can be more opposite to the genius of Christianity than that spirit of pride, which reigns over almost all of us, which disguises us from ourselves,

which clothes us with, I know not what, phantom of grandeur, and self-importance, and which persuades us, that a little money, a distant relation to a noble family, a little genius, a little countenance and applause, entitle us to an elevation above the rest of mankind, and to the fantastic privilege of considering ourselves as men made of a mould different from that of the rest of mankind? What can be more criminal than those calumnies, and slanderous falsehoods which infect the greatest part of our conversations; to maintain which, we pretend to penetrate the most hidden recesses of a neighbour's heart, we publish his real faults, we impute others to him, of which he is perfectly innocent, we derive our happiness from his misery, and build our glory on his shame? What more execrable than habitual swearing and profaning the name of Almighty God? Is it not shocking to hear some, who profess Christianity, daily profane religion, revile its institution, blaspheme their Creator for an unfavourable cast of a die, or a turn of a card? In general, can any thing be more

injurious to Jesus Christ than that attachment which most of us have to the world, although in different degrees? What more fully proves our light estimation of his promises, our little confidence in his faithfulness? My brethren, we tremble when we hear of a wretch whom hunger had driven to commit a robbery on the highway; or of a man mad with passion, who in a transport of wrath had killed his brother! But, would we enter into our own hearts, would we take the pains to examine the nature of our own sins, we should soon find ourselves so black and hideous, that the distance, which partial self-love puts between us and the men, at whom we tremble, would diminish and disappear.

SAURIN.

As the power of sin is revealed only in the Scriptures, so the nature of it is best understood from thence. And though the writings of the Apostles give us few definitions, yet we may find even in them a proper definition of sin. *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law*, saith St. John, and then rendereth this reason of that universal assertion, *for sin is the transgression of the law*, 1 John iii. 4; which is an argument drawn from the definition of sin; for he saith not, *Every sin is the transgression of the law*, which had been necessary, if he had spoken by way of proposition only, to have proved the universality of his assertion, but produceth it indefinitely, *sin is the transgression of the law*; which is sufficient, speaking it by way of definition. And it is elsewhere most evident that every sin is something prohibited by some law, and deviating from the same. For the Apostle affirming, that *the law worketh wrath*; that is, a punishment from God, giveth this as a reason or proof of his affirmation, *for where no law is, there is no transgression*, Rom. iv. 15. The law of God is the rule of the actions of men, and any aberration from that rule is sin: the law of God is pure, and whatsoever is contrary to that law is impure. Whatsoever therefore is done by man, or is in man, having any contrariety or opposition to the law of God, is sin. Every action, every word, every thought, against the law, is a sin of commission, as it is terminated to an object dissonant from, and contrary to, the prohibition of the law, or a negative precept. Every omission of

a duty required of us is a sin, as being contrary to the commanding part of the law, or an affirmative precept. Every evil habit contracted in the soul of man by actions committed against the law of God, is a sin constituting a man truly a sinner, even then when he actually sinneth not. Any corruption and inclination in the soul, to do that which God forbiddeth, and to omit that which God commandeth, howsoever such corruption and evil inclination came into that soul, whether by an act of his own will, or by an act of the will of another, is a sin, as being something dissonant and repugnant to the law of God. And this I conceive sufficient to declare the nature of sin. BP. PEARSON.

Enmity to God the root of Sin.

WHAT is the reason men row against the stream of their own consciences? What is the reason men of sublimated reason, and clear natural wisdom, are voluntary slaves to their own lusts, which they serve with as delightful, as disgraceful a drudgery, against the light of their own minds? It is from this contrariety to God, seated in their very nature, they could never else so earnestly, so cheerfully do the devil's work before God's. They could never else be deaf to the loud voice of God, and have their ears open to the least whisper of Satan. Whence proceeds our stupidity, the folly of our thoughts, the levity of our minds, the deadness of our affections, the sleepiness of our souls, our inexcusable carelessness in holy duties, more than any thing of a temporal concern, but from this aversion from God? It is this enmity dulls our heart in any service. Though conscience which is in us, to keep up the interest of God's law, spurs us on to duty, yet sin that is within us, that keeps up the quarrel against Heaven, hinders us from it, or diverts us in it. CHARNOCK.

The Evil and Malignity of Sin.

SEE here what an accursed thing sin is, that carries wrapped up in its bowels woe, wrath, and eternal death. To this it is that you owe all the miseries you have already felt; and to this are due all that God hath threatened to inflict hereafter. The law is not to be condemned for condemning the transgressors of it; the justice of God is not to be censured for taking the forfeiture of our lives and souls; but

all our misery is to be charged upon ourselves, upon our corrupt natures, and our sinful lives. We ourselves breed those vipers that gnaw out our very bowels: and as putrefied bodies breed those filthy worms and insects which devour them, so do we breed those filthy lusts in our hearts which are continually preying upon our vitals, and will at last fatally destroy us. As God is an holy God, so he infinitely hates sin; and as he is a just God, so he will assuredly punish it: not a soul of man shall escape; not a sin be passed by without having its due curse; yea, we find God so hates sin, that when he found but the imputation of it upon his own Son, divine vengeance would not suffer him to escape, but loads him with sorrow, and fills his soul with darkness and agonies, nails him to the cross, and there exacts from him a dreadful recompense, which he was fain to make good to the utmost demand of his Father's justice before he could be discharged. One drop of this poison being let fall upon the once glorious angels, turned them into devils, made all their rays of light and lustre fall off from them; and being once tainted with this venom, God could no longer endure them in his presence, but hurls them down all flaming into hell. It is sin that is the fuel of those unquenchable flames, and lays in all those stores of fire and brimstone, which shall there burn for ever. It is a sin that disrobed man of his innocence, turned him out of paradise, and will certainly, if not repented of and forsaken, turn him into hell. And therefore as ye love God, or your own souls, be sure that ye hate iniquity; entertain not any kind thoughts of it, however it tempt and solicit you. Remember the curse of God is affixed inseparably unto it; and if you will suffer the accursed thing to cleave unto you, you must for ever be accursed with it.

BR. HOPKINS.

So foul and horrid is a mortal sin in its own nature, that though it passed only in thought, and none knew it but God, and he who committed it, and which endured no longer than an instant, yet it deserves the torments of hell for all eternity: for by how much greater is the majesty of God, which is despised, by so much greater is the injury offered him; and therefore as the majesty of God, which is despised by sin, is infinite, so the despite of it

must contain, in itself, a certain kind of infinity; by how much greater is the reverence due to a person, by so much greater is the disrespect and affront offered him. And as to God there is due an infinite reverence, so the injury done him is of an inexplicable malice, which by no good works of a mere creature, how many and great soever, can be expiated. So great is the malignity of a mortal sin, that, being put into the balance of Divine Justice, it would outweigh all the good works of all the saints, although they were a thousand times more and greater than they are: because the good works with which God is honoured by his saints, although in themselves great in value, yet in respect of God, unto whom they add nothing, and who is nothing bettered by them, they are not valuable; unto whose Divine Goodness, not only they, but infinitely more, and greater, are but a debt: but for God to be despised by his creature, who, by infinite titles, is obliged to serve him, and ought to reverence him with an infinite honour, is a thing so highly repugnant to his majesty, that, if God were capable of grief, it would more afflict him than all the pious actions of the saints content him. . . . This is the reason why it was necessary that God should become man, being the Divine Justice could not be appeased with less than the satisfaction of a Divine Person: let those, therefore, cease to marvel, that a momentary sin should be punished with eternal torments, who see that, for sin, God was made man, and died for man; and certainly, it is a far greater wonder, that God should die for the sin of another, than that man should, for his own sin, suffer an eternal punishment: and if the malice of sin be so exorbitant, that nothing could satisfy for it less than God: it is nothing strange, that that which hath no limit, nor bound in evil, should have no limit in punishment, but should exceed all time, and be eternal. . . .

And as a sin is grievous in its own nature, so it is much enlarged by the circumstances which attend it: let us consider who it is that sins; it is a most vile and wretched man, who presumes to lift up his hands against his Creator: and what is man but a sink of corruption, and, by birth, a slave of the devil? and yet he dares offend his Maker. . . . If such an offence were committed by one man against

another, betwixt whom the difference is not great, being both equal in nature, it were very heinous; what shall it deserve, being committed against God, the Lord and Creator of all, whose immense greatness is infinitely distant from the nature of his creature? O, good God! who is able to express what a sinner doth against thee and himself? He despises thy majesty, razes out thy law from his heart, contemns thy justice, scorns thy threats, despises thy promises, makes a solemn renunciation of the glory thou hast promised him: and all to bind himself an eternal slave to Satan, desiring rather to please thine enemy than thee, who art his Father, his Friend, and all his good; desiring rather to die eternally, by displeasing thee, than to enjoy heaven for ever, by serving thee.

BP. TAYLOR.

We may discover more clearly *the evil of sin*, which no sacrifice could expiate but the blood of the Son of God. It is true, the internal malignity of sin, abstracted from its dreadful effects, is most worthy of our hatred; for it is in its own nature direct enmity against God, and obscures the glory of all his attributes. It is the violation of his majesty, who is the universal Sovereign of heaven and earth; a contrariety to his holiness, which shines forth in his law; a despising of his goodness, the attractive to obedience; the contempt of his omniscience, which sees every sin when it is committed; the slighting of his terrible justice and power, as if the sinner could secure himself from his indignation; a denial of his truth, as if the threatening were a vain terror to scare men from sin. And all this done voluntarily, to please an irregular, corrupt appetite, by a despicable creature, who absolutely depends upon God for his being and happiness.

These considerations seriously pondered, are most proper to discover the extremity of its evil: but sensible demonstrations are most powerful to convince and affect us: and those are taken from the fearful punishments that are inflicted for sin. Now the torments of hell, which are the just and full recompense of sin, are not sensible till they are inevitable; and temporal judgments cannot fully declare the infinite displeasure of God against the wilful contempt of his authority. But in the sufferings of Christ it is expressed to the utmost.

If justice itself had rent the heavens, and come down in the most visible terror to revenge the rebellions of men, it could never have made stronger impressions upon us than the death of Christ duly considered. The destruction of the world by water, the miraculous burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by showers of fire, and all the other most terrible judgments, do not afford such a sensible instruction of the evil of sin. If we regard the dignity of his person and the depth of his sufferings, he is an unparalleled example of God's indignation for the breach of his holy law; for he that was the Son of God and the Lord of glory, was made a man of sorrows. He endured derision, scourgings, stripes, and at last a cruel and cursed death. The Holy of Holies was crucified between two thieves. By how much the life of Christ was more precious than the lives of all men, by so much in his death doth the wrath of God appear more fully against sin, than it would in the destruction of the whole world of sinners. And his spiritual sufferings infinitely exceeded all his corporeal. The impressions of wrath that were inflicted by God's immediate hand upon his soul, forced from him those strong cries, that moved all the powers of heaven and earth with compassion. If the curtain were drawn aside, and we could look into the chambers of death, where sinners lie down in sorrow for ever, and hear the woful expressions and deep complaints of the damned, with what horror and distraction they speak of their torments, we could not have a fuller testimony of God's infinite displeasure against sin, than in the anguish and agonies of our Redeemer; for whatever his sufferings were in kind, yet in their degree and measure they were equally terrible with those that condemned sinners endure. Now, how is it possible that rational agents should freely, in the open light, for perishing vanities, dare to commit sin? Can they avoid or endure the wrath of an incensed God? If God spared not his Son when he came in the similitude of sinful flesh, how shall sinners who are deeply and universally defiled, escape? Can they fortify themselves against the Supreme Judge? Can they encounter with the fury of the Almighty, the apprehensions of which made the soul of Christ heavy unto death? Have they patience to bear that for ever, which was to Christ, who had the strength of the Deity to support him,

have been taught in the world, have not a spiritual sense and experience of the power of indwelling sin, and that because they are wholly under the dominion of it. They find not that there is darkness and folly in their minds, because they are darkness itself, and darkness will discover nothing. They find not deadness and an indisposition in their hearts and wills to God, because they are dead wholly in trespasses and sins. They are at peace with their lusts, by being in bondage unto them. And this is the state of most men in the world, which makes them wofully despise all their eternal concerns. Whence is it that men follow and pursue the world with so much greediness, that they neglect heaven, and life, and immortality for it every day? Whence is it that some pursue their sensuality with delight? they will drink, and revel, and have their sports, let others say what they please. Whence is it that so many live so unprofitably under the Word, that they understand so little of what is spoken unto them, that they practise less of what they understand, and will by no means be stirred up to answer the mind of God in his calls unto them? It is all from this law of sin, and the power of it that rules and bears sway in men, that all these things do proceed; but it is not such persons of whom at present we particularly treat. . . .

Indwelling sin is universal in all of the soul. Would this law of sin have contented itself to have subdued any one faculty of the soul; would it have left any one at liberty, any one affection free from its yoke and bondage, it might possibly have been with more ease opposed or subdued: but when Christ comes with his spiritual power upon the soul to conquer it to himself, he hath no quiet landing-place. He can set foot on no ground, but what he must fight for and conquer. Not the mind, not an affection, not the will, but all is secured against him. And when grace hath made its entrance; yet sin will dwell in all its coasts. Were any thing in the soul at perfect freedom and liberty, there a stand might be made to drive it from all the rest of its holds; but it is universal, and wars in the whole soul. The mind hath its own darkness and vanity to wrestle with; the will its own stubbornness, obstinacy, and perverseness; every affection its own frowardness and

aversion from God, and its sensuality to deal withal; so that one cannot yield relief unto one another as they ought; they have, as it were, their hands full at home. Hence it is that our knowledge is imperfect, our obedience weak, love not unmixed, fear not pure, delight not free and noble.

DR. J. OWEN.

From the time that Adam departed from the Fountain of righteousness, the soul has been entirely infected with sin. He deceives himself grossly, who takes the word *flesh* for the body only, or supposes that the Apostle, in opposing it to the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, meant a single faculty only of the soul. The Apostle himself removes the difficulty entirely, when he informs us, that sin resides not in any single faculty only of the soul, but has spread its mortal infection through all of them, in such a manner as to leave nothing pure and clean, nothing sound and whole, in any of them. The understanding is filled with darkness and blindness, and the heart with perverseness and malice.

Even that faculty of the soul, from which it chiefly derives its excellence and nobility, is not merely wounded, but even so corrupted, that it stands in need not of being healed only, but also of having its nature renewed. Sin has taken possession of the heart and the understanding. The whole man, from the sole of the foot even unto the head, is so overwhelmed with a deluge of corruption, that not a single article of him is free from sin.

CALVIN.

Power of Indwelling Sin in counteracting the graces of the Spirit.

THERE is that which adds weight to this consideration. God suffers us not to be unmindful of this assistance he hath afforded us, but is continually calling upon us to make use of the means appointed for the attaining of the end proposed. He shews them unto us, as the angel shewed the water-spring to Agar. Commands, exhortations, promises, threatenings, are multiplied to this purpose; see them summed up, Heb. ii. 1. He is continually saying to us, 'Why will you die? Why will you wither and decay? Come to the pastures provided for you, and your souls shall live.' If we see a

lamb run from the fold into the wilderness, we wonder not if it be torn and rent of wild beasts : if we see a sheep leaving its green pastures and water-courses, to abide in dry barren heaths, we count it no marvel, nor inquire farther, if we see him lean and ready to perish. But if we find lambs wounded in the fold, we wonder at the boldness and rage of the beasts of prey, that durst set upon them there. If we see sheep pining in full pastures, we judge them to be diseased and unsound. It is indeed no marvel that poor creatures, who forsake their own mercies, and run away from the pasture and fold of Christ in his ordinances, are rent and torn with divers lusts, and do pine away with hunger and famine. But to see men living under, and enjoying all the means of spiritual thriving, yet to decay, not to be fat and flourishing, but rather daily to pine and wither, this argues some secret powerful distemper, whose poisonous and noxious qualities hinder the virtue and efficacy of the means they enjoy. This is indwelling sin. So wonderfully powerful, so effectually poisonous it is, that it can bring leanness on the souls of men in the midst of all precious means of growth and flourishing. It may well make us tremble to see men living under, and in, the use of the means of the Gospel, preaching, praying, administration of sacraments, and yet grow colder every day than other in zeal for God, more selfish and worldly, even habitually to decline as to the degrees of holiness which they had attained unto. . . .

Such is the greatness of the strength and efficacy of indwelling sin, that it giveth stop or control unto that exceeding greatness of power which is put forth in the Word, in the conviction and reformation of men. We see it by experience, that men are not easily wrought upon by the Word ; the most of men can live under the dispensation of it all the days of their lives, and continue as senseless and stupid as the seats they sit upon, or the flint in the rock of stone.

Mighty difficulties and prejudices must be conquered, great strokes must be given to the conscience before this can be brought about. It is as the stopping of a river in his course, and turning his streams another way ; the hindering of a stone in his falling downwards, or the turning away of the wild ass, when furiously set to pur-

sue his way, as the prophet speaks, Jer. ii. 24. To turn men from their corrupt ways, sins, and pleasures ; to make them pray, fast, hear, and do many things contrary to the principle of flesh, which is secretly predominant in them, willingly and gladly ; to cause them to profess Christ and the Gospel, it may be under some trials and reproaches ; to give them light to see into sundry mysteries, and gifts for the discharge of sundry duties ; to make dead, blind, senseless men to walk, and talk, and do all the outward offices and duties of living and healthy men, with the like attendancies of conviction and reformation, are the effects and products of mighty power and strength. Indeed the power that the Holy Ghost puts forth by the Word, in the staggering and conviction of sinners, in the wakening of their consciences, the enlightening of their minds, the changing of their affections, the awing of their hearts, the reforming of their lives, and compelling them to duties, is inexpressible.

But now, unto all these is there check and control given by indwelling sin. It prevails against this whole work of the Spirit by the Word, with all the advantages of providential dispensations, in afflictions and mercies, wherewith it is attended. When sin is once enraged, all these things become but like the withs and cords wherewith Samson was bound before his head was shaven : cry but to it, '*The Philistines are upon thee*, there is a subtle, a suitable temptation, now show thy strength and efficacy,' all these things become like tow that hath smelt the fire. Conscience is stifled, reputation in the church of God despised, light supplanted, the impressions of the Word cast off, convictions digested, heaven and hell are despised ; sin makes its way through all, and utterly turns the soul from the good and right ways of God. Sometimes it doth this subtly, by imperceptible degrees, taking off all force of former impressions from the Spirit by the Word, sullyng conscience by degrees, hardening the heart, and making sensual the affections by various workings, that the poor back-slider in heart scarce knows what he is doing, until he be come to the very bottom of all impiety, profaneness, and enmity against God. Sometimes falling in conjunction with some vigorous temptation,

it suddenly, and at once, plunges the soul into a course of alienation from God, and the profession of his ways.

DR. J. OWEN.

Greatness and Danger of the least Sins.

As the greatest sin discovered, lamented, and mourned over, by a believer, cannot ruin him; so the least sin indulged, covered, and connived at, will certainly prove the destruction of the sinner. No sin, though ever so small, is tolerated by the pure and perfect law of God. The *commandment is exceeding broad*; not as if it gave men a latitude to walk as they please, but *broad*, that is extending itself to all our words, thoughts, actions, and affections; laying a law upon them all; conniving at no evil in any man, 1 Pet. ii. 1.

And as the word gives no allowance for the least sin, so it is the very nature of sincerity and uprightness, to set the heart against every way of wickedness, Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24; Job xxxi.; and especially against that sin which was its darling in the days of its vanity, Psal. xviii. 23.

Again; the soul that has had a saving sight of Jesus Christ, and a true discovery of the evil of sin, in the glass both of the law and gospel, can account no sin small. He knows the demerit of the smallest sin is God's eternal wrath, and that not the least sin can be remitted without the shedding and application of the blood of Christ, which blood is of infinite value and price.

God's people know, that little as well as great sins are dangerous, deadly, and destructive in their own nature. A little poison will destroy a man. A man would have thought that Adam's sin was no great matter; yet what dreadful work did it make! Indeed no sin can be little, because the object against whom it is committed, is so great; whence it receives a kind of infiniteness in itself; and because the price paid to redeem us from it is so invaluable.

And is the smallest sin ruinous in its own nature? and will it certainly prove the ruin of the soul that hides and covers it? O then let my spirit accomplish a diligent search. Look to it, O my soul, that no sin be indulged by thee. Set these considerations as so many flaming swords in the way of thy carnal delights and lusts.

Let me never say of any sin as Lot did of Zoar, *It is a little one, spare it*. Shall I spare that which cost the blood of Jesus Christ? The Lord would not spare him, when *he made his soul an offering for sin*; neither will he spare me, if I defend and hide it, Deut. xxix. 20. If my heart were right and my conversation sound, that lust, whatever it be, that is so favoured by me, would especially be abhorred and hated. Whatever my convictions and reformation have been, yet if there be but one sin retained and delighted in, this keeps the devil's interest in my soul. And though for a time he seems to depart, yet at last he will return with seven worse spirits, and this is the sin that will open the door to him, and deliver up my soul. Lord, let me make thorough work of it; let me cut it off, and pluck it out, though it be as a right hand or eye. Shall I come so near the kingdom of God, and yet stick at a small matter, and lose all for want of one thing? Lord, let me shed the blood of the dearest lust for his sake, who shed his dearest blood for me. FLAVEL.

That trite distinction of sin into mortal and venial, which is so common among the schoolmen, is not only vain and destitute of all support from the word of God, but is indeed very faulty, and, far from being itself venial, well deserves to be exploded as mortal, for that malignant influence which it has upon the morals of men. If the most open danger of the divine displeasure and of eternal death cannot hinder the bold race of men from rushing on headlong to every crime, and breaking all the barriers of duty which God has prescribed them, will it not add great licentiousness to all the crowd and tumult of headstrong desires, when some sins are said to be by their own nature, and in the whole kind of them, free from the condemning sentence of the divine law? But what I here oppose is this—give me the holiest man upon earth, the man who above all others stands at the remotest distance, both in the affections of his mind and in the conduct of his life, from those sins which they acknowledge as mortal, will he not deeply feel his need of daily forgiveness, from the multiplied pollutions of his daily infirmities? He truly accounts no sin little, which is committed against the great and ever-blessed God, nor any

pardon little, which he knows to proceed from his infinite grace. Nor will he promise himself the pardon of the least fault which he indulges; nor will he despair of obtaining a pardon of the greatest for which he is truly penitent. And this is the law of grace.

LEIGHTON.

But we are not, with the schoolmen, to extenuate venial, or pardonable sins. No: even those which are so classed are immense evils, at war with the law of God, and in their own nature mortal—that is, such as would bring upon men the eternal wrath of God, unless, for Christ's sake, they were pardoned to those who are reconciled to God through him.

MELANCTHON.

It is the artifice of Satan to make Sin appear only a trifle before it is committed.

It is the artifice of Satan, when he tempts a sinner, to make him believe that sin is only a trifle, and that the mercy of God is inexhaustible; but when he has once gained his end, and the sin is committed, he represents it to the sinner's conscience in different colours.

This the unhappy Judas experienced to his infinite grief, and irreparable loss. To betray Christ, at first seemed to him but as a very slight fault; so that he quickly resolved on it. He thought his Master, out of his abundant good-nature, and uncommon mildness and lenity to great sinners, would soon forgive him; and that as Jesus had escaped through the midst of his enemies more than once, he would easily extricate himself from the danger he was going to involve him in. As to the former supposition, he was confirmed in it, as Jesus had publicly declared, *He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out or reject.* But Satan having now gained his point, and seduced Judas into sin; he assumes another tone, and represents the affair in a very different light. The sin, which before seemed to Judas a trifle light as air, now oppressed his conscience as an insupportable load; so that he was crushed under the oppressive weight of it. On the other hand, the mercy and lenity of Christ, which he before thought to be without bounds, vanished from his mind; so that he no longer entertained any hopes of

pardon and forgiveness. Thus it is with the careless and secure. They first look on sin as a grain of sand or a mote in the sun, and make no account of it; but afterwards it swells to a gigantic size, even beyond the stretch of their imagination. Satan first allures them with a vain hope of God's mercy, and thereby brings them presumptuously to sin, from an assurance of pardon and forgiveness; but after the sin is committed, he fills them with fears and terrors, by representing to their consciences the divine justice, and those dreadful threatenings which God has thundered against sinners. Happy is the man, who, before he commits sin, thinks on the justice and purity of the Deity, in order to deter him from sinning; but, after he has sinned, reflects on the infinite mercy of God, and by that consideration is preserved from falling into the abyss of despair.

Again, Satan extenuates great and flagrant crimes, by inspiring the sinner with a false and delusive hope.

Judas was puffed up with the vain hope, that Christ would not fail at once to break asunder all the cords with which his enemies would bind him, and by that means escape out of their hands. It is probable that his conscience, at first, made some struggle against the temptation to commit such a horrible crime; but he was at last over-persuaded by this false hope, which at length turned the scale in favour of covetousness, against the dictates of his conscience. This is the case with many thousands of unhappy sinners. Some are led into sin by the impious hope, that their crimes will never come to light, and consequently that they shall escape the punishment which the law inflicts on such crimes. Others are drawn on by a presumptuous hope of obtaining pardon and forgiveness from the divine mercy, which is infinite and inexhaustible. Others again are allured into wickedness by the hopes, that they shall prevent any ill consequences that may follow on their sins; and others by the hopes, that they shall one day repent, and intreat forgiveness of God; that they will be able to repair the faults they shall have committed, by other good works, and by that means to balance their account with Heaven. By these delusive and groundless suppositions, a sinner is induced to commit the most heinous crimes,

and greatest villanies. But when matters turn out afterwards quite contrary to his vain expectations, and he finds himself deceived in his hope, then he acknowledges with grief and confusion, that he never could have thought that this would have been the consequence of his sins; and if he could in the least have imagined it, he would never have ventured to commit them. But let us maturely consider, that when a sin is once committed, it is no longer in our power to prevent the consequences of it. When a stone is once thrown by the hand or sling, we can no longer direct its course by a wish: as little is sin, when once committed, subject to our wishes and directions. Let us therefore turn a deaf ear to the solicitations and blandishments of false hope; for the end of such a delusive hope is despair.

RAMBACH.

Danger of continuing in Sin because the Lord in mercy forbears.

It is one of the sad consequences of our depravity, as well as one of the strongest proofs of it, that we are prone to turn every blessing into a curse, and to make our remedy our poison. Not content with mere ingratitude for mercies, we abuse them. Thus the Jews treated the long-suffering of God, and thus are many of us at the present hour treating it. We hear of its riches and we experience its greatness; but instead of employing the hours it gives us in seeking reconciliation with Heaven, we go on adding sin to sin, and increasing the terrors of our future condemnation. Because God is slow to punish, we conclude that he never will punish; that he is unconcerned about our sins; that he either does not notice them, or, if he notices them, that he is too merciful and too mindful of our frailty and infirmities to call us to a strict account for them. The consequence is that we become more fearless and hardened. Instead of forsaking our old sins, we plunge into new transgressions, and make that very patience, which was designed to lead us to repentance, the means of inspiring us with confidence and presumption in our rebellion. *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil, Eccles. viii. 11.*

No conduct, brethren, can be more base than this, none more dangerous; but there is none more common. There is an awful propensity to it in our very nature. We naturally reason from the past to the future, and we are prone to infer that the dispensations of the Almighty towards us will for ever continue the same as they have hitherto been, that mercy will ever be mingled with judgment, and patience never have an end. It becomes us then to look closely to ourselves; to regard the question in Rom. ii. 4. as addressed to us in particular; to consider the Holy Spirit as singling us out this very hour, and saying to each of us, *Despiseest thou the riches of the Lord's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering? . . .*

But the time of patience will have an end. Notwithstanding all present appearances to the contrary, there is a day coming in which it will give place to wrath. And this wrath will be aggravated by the mercy which has preceded it. The fact is, that God exercises his long-suffering for his own glory, as well as for our salvation; and though we may lose the advantages, he will not lose the honour of it. When patience has performed her appointed work, she will retire from our sight, and justice will ascend the throne and have a solemn triumph in the final destruction of those who have spurned at mercy. Now the justice of Jehovah magnifies his patience; but then patience abused will magnify his justice, make it more fearful, and invest it with more awful splendours. His backwardness to punish is now causing thousands of his enemies to suspect his purity and greatness; but then the outpouring of his treasured wrath will wipe off the reproach, and force an assembled world to acknowledge the fearfulness of his holiness and the terrors of his majesty. *O consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.* Be thoughtful. Be prayerful. Force your careless souls to reflect, and your stubborn knees to bend. At least be determined to live no longer utterly regardless of the patience, which spares you. Bring it before your mind in the morning, and in the evening meditate on it again, and strive to impress on your soul a sense of its greatness and its design. O let not its inestimable riches be all wasted. Perish not while mercy so great and so free is

waiting to deliver you. Harden not the heart, which the eternal Spirit is so ready to soften; and destroy not the soul, which the everlasting Jesus died to save.

REV. C. BRADLEY.

Sin is Sin in a Believer as well as in an Unbeliever.

THIS I say, lest any man should say that after grace is received, there is little account to be made of sin: sin is truly sin, whether a man commit it before he hath received Christ, or after; and God always hateth sin; yea, all sin is damnable, as touching the fact itself, but in that it is not damnable, to him that believeth, it cometh of Christ, who by his death hath taken away sin; but to him that believeth not in Christ, not only all his sins are damnable, but even his good works also are sin; according to that saying, *Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin*, Rom. xiv. 23. Therefore the error of the schoolmen is most pernicious, which do distinguish sins according to the fact, and not according to the person; he that believeth has as great sin as the unbeliever, but to him that believeth it is forgiven, and not imputed: to the unbeliever it is not pardoned, but imputed. Not for any difference of sins, or because the sin of the believer is less, and the sin of the unbeliever is greater, but for the difference of the *persons*. For the faithful assureth himself by faith, that his sin is forgiven him, forasmuch as Christ hath given himself for it. Therefore, although he hath sin in him, and daily sinneth, yet he continueth godly; but contrariwise, the unbeliever continueth wicked. And this is the true wisdom and consolation of the godly, that although they have, and commit sins, yet they know that for Christ's sake they are not imputed to them.

LUTHER.

No thanks to sin, if the Lord over-rule it for the good of his people; it is still the abominable thing which his soul hateth; and whatsoever may be his secret will, we are to keep close to the declaration of his own written word, which bids us to resist sin even *unto blood*: whosoever can delight himself in sin, under the persuasion that God will make it work together for his good, is under a most powerful delusion of the devil: such a one is indeed accomplishing God's decree; but he carries a

dreadful mark in his forehead, that such decree is, that he shall be punished with *everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*. Sin is directly contrary to the new nature of a believer, to that incorruptible seed which remaineth in him, and therefore *he cannot sin, because he is born of God*; that is, the new man, the regenerate part, cannot sin. *It is not I, says the Apostle, but sin that dwelleth in me*. Yea, so great an aversation is there between the love of sin and the new creature, that he esteems the position, *Let us sin that grace may abound*, as the most damnable doctrine that ever steamed out of the bottomless pit of hell; and though 'grace and salvation' is all his song, yet he knoweth that *the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*.

Sin is sin in a believer as much as in an unbeliever; and wheresoever God sees sin, it cannot but be hateful to the eyes of his purity; but because Christ's righteousness is imputed, therefore sin is not imputed: forasmuch as God never imputeth sin and righteousness unto the same person.

REV. MR. FLETCHER.

Sin the usual cause of the Believer's want of joy in Religion.

O LET not that ever be forgotten, which is so plainly said, so commonly known, so familiar to almost every religious ear, yet too little felt by any of our hearts, *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear*, Isa. lix. 1, 2. And this is, on the whole, a merciful dispensation of God, though it may seem severe; regard it not, therefore, merely as your calamity, but as intended to awaken you, that you may not content yourself, even with lying in tears of humiliation before the Lord, but, like Joshua, rise and exert yourself vigorously, to *put away from you that accursed thing*, whatever it be. . . .

Receive it therefore, on the whole, as the most important advice that can be given you, immediately to enter on a strict examination of your conscience. Attend on its gentlest whispers. If a suspicion arises in your mind, that any thing has not

been right, trace that suspicion, search into every secret folding of your heart; improve, to the purposes of a fuller discovery, the advice of your friends, the reproaches of your enemies; recollect for what your heart hath smitten you at the table of the Lord, for what it would smite you if you were upon a dying bed, and within this hour to enter on eternity. When you have made any discovery, note it down, and go on in your search, till you can say, These are the remaining corruptions of my heart, these are the sins and follies of my life; this have I neglected; this I have done amiss. And when the account is as complete as you can make it, set yourself in the strength of God to a strenuous reformation, or rather begin the reformation of every thing that seems amiss as soon as ever you discover it: *Return to the Almighty, and thou shalt be built up; and put iniquity far from thy tabernacle; then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee; thou shalt pay thy vows unto him, and his light shall shine upon thy ways,* Job xxii. 23, 26, 27.

DODDRIDGE.

To neglect the smallest Sin is most dangerous, especially considering the vigilance of Satan.

THE least enemy being despised and neglected, as men observe, proves often too great. The smallest appearances of evil, the least things that may prejudice our spiritual good, while we make no reckoning of them, may do us great mischief. Our not considering them makes them become considerable, especially being under the command of a vigilant and skilful leader, who knows how to improve advantages. Therefore, in things which we many times account petty, and not worthy our notice as having any evil in them, we should learn to suspect the address of this adversary, who usually hides himself, and couches under some covert, till he may appear irresistible, and seize on us; and then, indeed, he *roars*. . . .

He studies our nature, and fits his temptations to it; knows the prevalency of lust, or earthliness, or that great and most general evil of pride, so like himself, and that is his throne in the heart. Sometimes, *he*

boweth down, as it is said of the lion, Psal. x. 9; he waits his opportunity craftily, and then assaults fiercely. And the children of God find sometimes so much violence in his temptations, that they surprise them; such horrid thoughts cast in as poisoned arrows, or *fiery darts*, as the Apostle speaks, Eph. vi. 16. And this his enmity, though it is against man in general, yet is most enraged against the children of God. He goes about and spies where they are weakest, and amongst them, directs his attacks most against those who are most advanced in holiness, and nearest unto God. They were once under his power, and now being escaped from him, he pursues them, as Pharaoh did the Israelites, with all his forces, raging and roaring after them, as a prey that was once in his den, and under his paw, and now is rescued. . . .

Is it not most reasonable hence to press watchfulness? to keep continual watch, to see what comes in, and what goes out; to try what is under every offer of the world, every motion of our own natural hearts, whether there be not some treachery, some secret intelligence or not? Especially after a time of some special seasons of grace, and some special new supplies of grace received in such seasons, (as after the holy sacrament,) then will he set on most eagerly, when he knows of the richest booty. The pirates that let the ships pass as they go by empty, watch them well when they return richly laden: so doth this great Pirate. Did he not assault our Saviour straight after his baptism? *ὁ πειράζων*. Matt. iv. 3. . . .

And when we have gained some advantage in a conflict, or when the enemy seems to retire and be gone, yet, even then, are we to be watchful, yea, then especially. How many, presuming on false safeties that way, and sitting down to carouse, or lying down to sleep, have been re-assaulted and cut off! Oh, beware when you think yourselves most safe! That very thought makes you least safe. . . .

The spiritual circumspectness and vigilancy of the mind, in a wary, waking posture, is very necessary, that it be not surprised by the assaults or sleights of Satan, by the world, nor by its nearest and most deceiving enemy, the corruption that dwells within, which being so near, doth most readily watch unperceived advan-

tages, and easily circumvent us, Heb. xii. 1. The soul of a Christian being surrounded with enemies, both of so great power and wrath, and so watchful to undo it, should it not be watchful for its own safety, and live in a military vigilance continually, keeping constant watch and sentinel, and suffering nothing to pass that may carry the least suspicion of danger? Should he not be distrustful and jealous of all the motions of his own heart, and the smilings of the world? And in relation to these, it will be a wise course to take that word as a good caveat, *Νῆφε καὶ μέμνησε ἀπιστεῖν. Be watchful, and remember to mistrust.* Under the garment of some harmless pleasure, or some lawful liberties, may be conveyed into thy soul some thief or traitor, that will either betray thee to the enemy, or at least pilfer and steal of the most precious things thou hast. Do we not by experience find, how easily our foolish hearts are seduced and deceived, and therefore apt to deceive themselves? And by things that seem to have no evil in them, they are yet drawn from the height of affection to their Supreme Good, and from communion with God, and study to please Him; which should not be intermitted, for then it will abate, whereas it ought still to be growing.

LEIGHTON.

In this unsearchable heart dwells the law of sin, and much of its security, and consequently of its strength, lies in this, that it is past our finding out. We fight with an enemy whose secret strength we cannot discover, whom we cannot follow into its retirements. Hence oftentimes, when we are ready to think sin quite ruined, after awhile we find it was but out of sight. It hath coverts and retreats in an unsearchable heart, whither we cannot pursue it. The soul may persuade itself all is well, when sin may be safe in the hidden darkness of the mind, which it is impossible that he should look into; for whatever makes manifest is light. It may suppose the will of sinning is utterly taken away, when yet there is an unsearchable reserve for a more suitable object, a more vigorous temptation, than at present it is tried withal. Hath a man had a contest with any lust, and a blessed victory over it by the Holy Ghost, as to that present trial? when he thinks it is utterly ex-

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pelled, he ere long finds that it was but retired out of sight. It can lie so close in the mind's darkness, in the will's indisposition, in the disorder and carnality of the affections, that no eye can discover it. The best of our wisdom is but to watch its first appearances, to catch its first under-earth heavings and workings, and to set ourselves in opposition to them; for to follow it into the secret corners of the heart, that we cannot do.

It is true, there is yet a relief in this case, namely, that he to whom the work of destroying the law of sin and body of death in us is principally committed, namely, the Holy Ghost, comes with his axe to the very root; neither is there any thing in an unsearchable heart that is not open and naked unto him, Heb. iv. 12; but we in a way of duty may hence see what an enemy we have to deal withal.

DR. J. OWEN.

Our warfare against the treacheries of Sin and the World ends only with our life.

ARM yourselves. There is still fighting, and sin will be molesting you; though wounded to death, yet will it struggle for life, and seek to wound its enemy; it will assault the graces that are in you. Do not think, if it be once struck, and you have given it a stab near to the heart, by the *sword of the Spirit*, that therefore it will stir no more. No, so long as you live in the flesh, in these bowels there will be remainders of the life of this flesh, your natural corruption; therefore ye must be armed against it. Sin will not give you rest, so long as there is a drop of blood in its veins, one spark of life in it; and that will be as long as you have life here. This old man is stout, and will fight himself to death; and at the weakest it will rouse up itself, and exert its dying spirits, as men will do sometimes more eagerly than when they were not so weak, nor so near death.

This the children of God often find to their grief, that corruptions which they thought had been cold dead, stir and rise up again, and set upon them. A passion or lust, that after some great stroke, lay a long while as dead, stirred not, and therefore they thought to have heard no more of it, though it shall never recover fully again, to be lively as before, yet will

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revive in such a measure as to molest, and possibly to foil them yet again. Therefore is it continually necessary that they live in arms, and put them not off to their dying day; till they put off the body, and be altogether free of the flesh. You may take the Lord's promise for victory in the end; that shall not fail; but do not promise yourself ease in the way, for that will not hold. If at some times you be undermost, give not all for lost: he hath often won the day, who hath been foiled and wounded in the fight. But likewise take not all for won, so as to have no more conflict, when sometimes you have the better, as in particular battles. Be not desperate when you lose, nor secure when you gain them: when it is worst with you, do not throw away your arms, nor lay them away when you are at best.

LEIGHTON.

Who can mention the treacheries and deceits that lie in the heart of man? It is not for nothing that the Holy Ghost so expresseth it, *it is deceitful above all things!* uncertain in what it doth, and false in what it promiseth. And hence moreover it is, amongst other causes, that in the pursuit of our war against sin, we have not only the old work to go over and over, but new work still while we live in this world; still new stratagems and wiles to deal withal, as the manner will be where unsearchableness and deceitfulness are to be contended with.

Never then let us reckon that our work in contending against sin, in crucifying, mortifying, and subduing of it, is at an end. The place of its habitation is unsearchable; and when we may think that we have thoroughly won the field, there is still some reserve remaining that we saw not, that we knew not of. Many conquerors have been ruined by their carelessness after a victory; and many have been spiritually wounded after great successes against this enemy. David was so. His great surprisal into sin was after a long profession, manifold experiences of God, and watchful keeping himself from his iniquity. And hence in part hath it come to pass, that the profession of many hath declined in their old age or riper time. They have given over the work of mortifying of sin, before their work was at an end. There is no way for us to pursue sin in its unsearchable habitation, but by being

endless in our pursuit. And that command of the Apostle which we have, Col. iii. 5, on this account is as necessary for them to observe, who are towards the end of their race, as those that are but at the beginning of it; *Mortify therefore your members that are on the earth*; be always doing it whilst you live in this world. It is true, great ground is obtained, when the work is vigorously and constantly carried on; sin is much weakened, so that the soul presseth forwards towards perfection. But yet the work must be endless whilst we are in this world. If we give over, we shall quickly see this enemy exerting itself with new strength and vigour.

Commit then the whole matter with all care and diligence unto him who can search the heart to the uttermost, and knows how to prevent all its treacheries and deceits. Here lies our safety. There is no treacherous corner in our hearts, but he can search it to the uttermost; there is no deceit in them, but he can disappoint it. This course David takes, Psalm cxxxix. After he had set forth the omnipresence of God, and his omniscience, v. 8-10, he makes improvement of it, v. 23: *Search me, O Lord, and try me*. As if he had said, 'It is but a little that I know of my deceitful heart, only I would be sincere, I would not have reserves for sin retained therein; wherefore do thou, who art present with my heart, who knowest my thoughts long before, undertake this work, perform it thoroughly, for thou alone art able so to do.'

DR. J. OWEN.

Men may be slaves to Sin though exempt from foul Impieties.

MEN who are some way exempted from the blot of foul impieties, may still remain slaves to sin, alive to it, and dead to God, living to the lusts of men, and not to the will of God, pleasing others and themselves, and displeasing him. And the smoothest, best bred, and most moralised natural man, is in this base thralldom; and he is the more miserable, in that he dreams of liberty in the midst of his chains, thinks himself clean by looking on those that wallow in gross profaneness; takes measure of himself by the most crooked lives of ungodly men about him, and so thinks himself very straight; but lays not the straight rule of the will of God to his ways

and heart, which if he did, he would then discover much crookedness in his ways, and much more in his heart, that now he sees not, but takes it to be square and even.

Therefore I advise and desire you to look more narrowly to yourselves in this, and see whether you be not still living to your own lusts and wills instead of to God, seeking, in all your ways, to advance and please yourselves, and not him. Is not the bent of your hearts set that way? Do not your whole desires and endeavours run in that channel, how you and yours may be somebody, and how you may have wherewithal to serve the flesh, and to be accounted of and respected amongst men? And if we trace it home, all a man's honouring and pleasing of others tends to, and ends in, pleasing of himself: it resolves into that. And is it not so meant by him? He pleases men, either that he may gain by them, or be respected by them, or that something that is still pleasing to himself may be the return of it. So, self is the grand idol, for which all other heart-idolatries are committed; and, indeed, in the unrenewed heart there is no scarcity of them. Oh! what multitudes, what heaps, if the wall were digged through, and the light of God going before us, and leading us in to see them! Ezek. viii. 8. The natural motion and way of the natural heart, is no other than still seeking out new inventions, a forge of new gods, still either forming them to itself, or worshipping those it hath already framed; committing spiritual fornication from God, with the creature, and multiplying lovers every where, as it is tempted; as the Lord complains of his people, *upon every high hill, and under every green tree*, Jer. ii. 20; iii. 6.

You will not believe so much ill of yourselves, will not be convinced of this unpleasant but necessary truth; and this is a part of our self-pleasing, that we please ourselves in this, that we will not see it, either in our callings and ordinary ways, or in our religious exercises. For even in these, we naturally aim at nothing but ourselves; either our reputation, or, at best, our own safety and peace; either to stop the cry of conscience for the present, or to escape the wrath that is to come; but not in a spiritual regard of the will of God, and out of pure love to himself for him-

self: yet, thus it should be, and that love, the divine fire in all our sacrifices. The carnal mind is in the dark, and sees not its vileness in living to itself, will not confess it to be so. But when God comes into the soul, he lets it see itself, and all its idols and idolatries, and forces it to abhor and loathe itself for all its abominations; and having discovered its filthiness to itself, then he purges and cleanses it for himself, *from all its filthiness, and from all its idols*, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, according to his promise, and comes in and takes possession of it for himself, enthrones himself in the heart. And it is never right nor happy till that be done.

LEIGHTON.

Men, though restrained from Sin by the presence of a child, yet regard not the presence of God.

WHOSOEVER thou art, that professest thyself a Christian, thou believest that God, whom thou servest, is present every where, both in heaven and earth, insomuch, that it is altogether impossible for thee to exclude him from thy company; where-soever thou goest, he will pursue thee; though thou should clothe thyself with darkness as it were with a garment, the darkness would be to him as the noon-day; and though it were possible for thee to deceive the eyes and observation of men and angels, yea, even of thine own conscience, yet to him thou wouldst be open and transparent, *γυμνὸς καὶ τετραχλισμένος*, as it were, dissected, and having the very entrails exposed to his sight.

Thou canst hide therefore nothing which thou doest from his eyes; he taketh notice of every word which thou speakest; he hears even the very whispering of thy thoughts; and all this thou sayest thou acknowledgest. Out of thy own mouth shalt thou be condemned, thou wicked servant: dardest thou then make thy master a witness of thy rebellion and disobedience? When thou art about the fulfilling of any of thine ungodly lusts, thou retirest thyself from company, and art afraid of the faces of men; thou abhorrest the light, and yet dardest outface him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun. Thou wouldst not have the confidence to commit filthiness, if thy friend were in company; and yet, what injury is done to him by it? What

commandment of his dost thou transgress in it? Or, if thou didst, what power or authority has he over thee to punish thee? Thou wouldst be ashamed to commit such a sin, if thy servant were by, one whom thou art so far from being afraid of, that himself, his words, almost his very thoughts, are in thy power: nay, if a child were in company, thou wouldst not have the face to do it.

Thou canst not deny, but respect to a friend, to a servant, even to a child, will withhold thee from such practices; and yet withal confessest that Almighty God, whom thou professest to serve, to fear, and to love, that he all the while looks upon thee, and observes thee; his eyes are never removed from thee, and, which is worse, though thou mayest endeavour to forget and blot such actions out of thy remembrance, yet it is impossible he should ever forget them; he keeps a register of all thy sins, which no time shall ever be able to deface: and what will it then profit thee to live a close concealed sinner from the world, or to gain amongst men the reputation of a devout religious Christian, when in the mean time thine own heart and conscience shall condemn thee; nay, when Almighty God, *who is greater than thy heart, and knoweth all things*, when he shall be able to object unto thee all thy close ungodly projects, all thy bosom private lusts? Yea, when that conceit (wherein thou didst so much please thyself) of being able to delude and blind the observation of the world, shall nothing avail thee; but whatsoever mischiefs thou hast contrived, whatsoever abominations thou hast practised, all these, with each aggravating circumstance, shall be discovered in the presence of all men, and angels, and devils; when Satan, whom before thou madest an instrument unto thy lusts, to whose counsels and suggestions thou before wouldst only hearken, shall be the most forward and eager to impeach thee.

CHILLINGWORTH.

If the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear?

It is true, then, that they are *scarcely saved*; even they who endeavour to walk uprightly in the ways of God, that is, *the righteous*, they are *scarcely saved*. This imports not any uncertainty or hazard in

the thing itself as to the end, in respect of the purpose and performance of God, but only, the great difficulties and hard encounters in the way; that they go through so many temptations and tribulations, so many *fightings without and fears within*. The Christian is so simple and weak, and his enemies are so crafty and powerful, the oppositions of the wicked world their hatreds, and scorns, and molestations, the sleights and violence of Satan, and, worst of all, the strength of his own corruptions; and by reason of abounding corruption, there is such frequent, almost continual, need of purifying by afflictions and trials, that he has need to be still under physic, and is of necessity at some times drained and brought so low that there is scarcely strength or life remaining in him.

And, truly, all outward difficulties would be but matter of ease, would be as nothing, were it not for the incumbrance of lusts, and corruptions within. Were a man to meet disgraces and sufferings for Christ, how easily would he go through them, yea, and rejoice in them, were he rid of the fretting impatience, the pride, and self-love, of his own carnal heart! These clog and trouble him worst, and he cannot shake them off, nor prevail against them without much pains, many prayers and tears; and many times, after much wrestling, he scarcely finds that he hath gained any ground: yea, sometimes he is foiled and cast down by them.

And so, in all other duties, such a fighting and continual combat, with a revolting, backsliding heart, the flesh still pulling and dragging downwards! When he would mount up, he finds himself as a bird with a stone tied to its foot; he hath wings that flutter to be upwards, but is pressed down with the weight fastened to him. What struggling with wanderings and deadness in hearing, and reading, and prayer! And what is most grievous, is, that, by their unwary walking, and the prevailing of some corruption, they grieve the Spirit of God, and provoke him to hide his face, and withdraw his comforts. How much pain to attain any thing, any particular grace of humility, or meekness, or self-denial; and if any thing be attained, how hard to keep and maintain it against the contrary party! How often are they driven back to their old point! If they do but cease from striving a little, they are carried

back by the stream. And what returns of doubtings and misbelief, after they thought they were got somewhat above them, inso-much that sometimes they are at the point of giving over, and thinking it will never be for them. And yet, through all these they are brought safe home. There is another strength than theirs, which bears them up, and brings them through. But these things, and many more of this nature, argue the difficulty of their course, and that it is not so easy a thing to come to heaven as most imagine it.

Thou that findest so little stop and conflict in it, who goest thy round of external duties, and all is well, art no more troubled; thou hast need to inquire, after a long time spent in this way, am I right? Have I not yet to begin? Surely, this looks not like the way to heaven, as it is described in the Scripture: it is too smooth and easy to be right.

And if the way of the righteous be so hard, then how hard shall be the end of the ungodly sinner that walks in sin with delight! It were strange if they should be at such pains, and with great difficulty attain their end, and he should come in amongst them in the end; they were fools indeed. True, if it were so. But what if it be not so? Then the wicked man is the fool, and shall find that he is, when he shall not be able to *stand in the judgment*. Where shall he appear, when to the end he might not appear, he would be glad to be smothered under the weight of the hills and mountains, if they could shelter him from appearing?

And what is the aim of all this which we have spoken, or can speak, on this subject, but that ye may be moved to take into deeper thoughts the concernment of your immortal souls? Oh, that you would be persuaded! Oh, that you would betake yourselves to Jesus Christ, and seek salvation in him! Seek to be covered with his righteousness, and to be led by his Spirit in the ways of righteousness. That will seal to you the happy certainty of the end, and overcome for you all the difficulties of the way. What is the Gospel of Christ preached for? What was the blood of Christ shed for? Was it not, that by receiving him, we might escape condemnation? Nay, this drew him from heaven: *He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly*, John x. 10.

LEIGHTON.

How to detect the deceitfulness of Sin.

HERE we may give some few directions for the obviating of this woful work of the deceitfulness of sin. Would we not be enticed or entangled, would we not be disposed to the conception of sin, would we be turned out of the road and way which goes down to death, let us take heed of our affections, which are of so great concernment in the whole course of our obedience, that they are commonly in the Scripture called by the name of the heart, as the principal thing which God requires in our walking before him. And this is not to be attended unto slightly. Prov. iv. 23, saith the wise man, *Keep thy heart with diligence*, or, as in the original, *above or before all keepings*. *Before every watch keep thy heart*. You have many keepings that you watch unto; you watch to keep your lives, to keep your estates, to keep your reputations, to keep up your families; but, saith he, above all these keepings, prefer that, attend to that of the heart, of your affections, that they be not entangled with sin; there is no safety without it. Save all other things and lose the heart, and all is lost, lost unto all eternity. You will say then, 'What shall we do, or how shall we observe this duty?'

1. *Keep your affections as to their object.*

First; In general. This advice the Apostle gives in this very case, Col. iii. His advice in the beginning of that chapter is to direct us unto the mortification of sin, which he expressly engageth in ver. 5. *Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth*. Prevent the working and deceit of sin, which wars in your members. To prepare us, to enable us hereunto, he gives us that great direction, ver. 2, *Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth*. Fix your affections upon heavenly things; this will enable you to mortify sin; fill them with the things that are above; let them be exercised with them, and so enjoy the chiefest place in them. They are above, blessed and suitable objects, meet for, and answering unto, our affections. God himself, in his beauty and glory; the Lord Jesus Christ, who is *altogether lovely, the chiefest of ten thousand*; grace and glory; the mysteries revealed in the Gospel; the blessedness promised thereby.

Were our affections filled, taken up, and possessed with these things, as it is our duty that they should be, it is our happiness when they are, what access could sin with its painted pleasures, with its sugared poisons, with its envenomed baits, have unto our souls? how should we loath all its proposals, and say unto them, Get ye hence as an abominable thing? For what are the vain transitory pleasures of sin, in comparison of the exceeding recompense of reward which is proposed unto us? Which argument the Apostle presses, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Secondly; as to the object of your affections in *an especial manner*; let it be the cross of Christ, which hath exceeding efficacy towards the disappointment of the whole work of indwelling sin. *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*, Gal. vi. 14. The cross of Christ he gloried and rejoiced in; this his heart was set upon, and these were the effects of it; *it crucified the world unto him*, made it a dead and undesirable thing. The baits and pleasures of sin are taken all of them out of the world, and the things that are in the world, namely, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*. These are the things that are in the world; from these doth sin take all its baits, whereby it enticeth and entangleth our souls. If the heart be filled with the cross of Christ, it casts death and undesirableness upon them all, it leaves no seeming beauty, no appearing pleasure or comeliness in them. Again, saith he, *it crucifieth me to the world*: makes my heart, my affections, my desires dead unto any of these things. It roots up corrupt lusts and affections, leaves no principle to go forth and make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. Labour, therefore, to fill your hearts with the cross of Christ. Consider the sorrows he underwent, the curse he bore, the blood he shed, the cries he put forth, the love that was in all this to your souls, and the mystery of the grace of God therein. Meditate on the vileness, the demerit, and punishment of sin, as represented in the cross, the blood, the death of Christ. Is Christ crucified for sin, and shall not our hearts be crucified with him unto sin? shall we give entertainment unto that, or hearken unto its dalliances, which wounded, which pierced, which slew our

dear Lord Jesus? God forbid! Fill your affections with the cross of Christ, that there may be no room for sin. The world once put him out of the house into a stable, when he came to save us; let him now turn the world out of our hearts, when he is come to sanctify us.

2. *Look to the vigour of the affections towards heavenly things*. If they are not constantly attended, excited, directed, and warned, they are apt to decay, and sin lies in wait to take every advantage against them. Many complaints we have in the Scripture of those who lost their first love, in suffering their affections to decay. And this should make us jealous over our own hearts, lest we also should be overtaken with the like backsliding frame. Wherefore be jealous over them; often strictly examine them, and call them to account; supply unto them due considerations for their exciting and stirring up unto duty.

DR. J. OWEN.

Victory promised in all our contests with Sin and Satan.

WE have a further ground for our expectation of victory in all contests with sin and Satan, from the powerful assistance of God himself, who is never wanting to those that seek after him, and never fails those that engage in his quarrels. While we strive against sin, we may safely expect that the Divinity itself will strive with us, and derive that strength and power into us that shall at last make us *more than conquerors*. God hath not forsaken the earth: but as his Almighty Essence runs through all things, sustaining and upholding the frame of the whole universe; so more especially does it bear up in its almighty arms those things that are more nearly related to himself, always cherishing them with his own goodness. Wheresoever God beholds any breathings after himself, he gives life to them, as those which are his own breath in them. As he who projects wickedness shall be sure to find Satan standing at his right hand ready to assist him in it; so he that pursues after God and holiness shall find God nearer to him than he is to himself, in the free and liberal communications of himself to him. He that goes out in God's battles, fighting under our Saviour's banner, may look upwards, and opening his eyes, may see *the mountains full of horses and chariots of fire round about him*, 2 Kings vii. 17. God hath

not so much delight in the death and destruction of men, as to see them struggling and contending for life, and himself stand by as a looker on. No, but with the most tender and fatherly compassions his bowels yearn over them, and his almighty arm is stretched forth for them; and in his strength they shall prevail: they shall be borne up, as upon eagles' wings; they shall walk in the might of his strength, who is able to save, and not faint. Where there is any serious and sober resolution against sin, any real motion towards God, there is the blessing of Heaven in it: he that planted it will also water it, and make it to bud and blossom and bring forth fruit.

Wherefore, let us make use of this as a further argument to enforce the Apostle's exhortation upon ourselves, *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; and, as the Psalmist speaks of his enemies, so let us say of our spiritual enemies, *They compass me about, they compass me in on every side; but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them*, Ps. cxviii. 11. Let us set ourselves with all our might to mortify the old man, and to crucify all the affections of the flesh: *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and run with patience the race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*, Heb. xii. 1, 2, as a great and mighty Conqueror, who will declare the perfection of his own power in our weakness, if we lay hold of his strength. Though we are not able to change our own natures, or to rise above the source of our animal and selfish beings, by our own power; yet let us endeavour to subdue all those external vices of luxury and wantonness, of injustice, revenge, and the like; let us withdraw the fuel of pride, malice, vain-glory, and whatsoever else holds us in captivity to hell, and with confidence apply ourselves to him who is an almighty Saviour; and when he joins his almighty strength with us, we need not fear any thing: *he shall tread down Satan under our feet, and we shall one day tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shall we trample under our feet*, Ps. xci. 13: we shall break the serpent's head, though he may bruise our heel. Though God may suffer him so far to serve his own rage and the hellish malice of such as are in league with him, as to pull down

with violence our earthly tabernacles; yet while we so suffer by him, we are conquerors over him.

REV. J. SMITH.

Nothing but the Blood of Sprinkling can wash away our sins.

MEN are not easily convinced and persuaded of the deep stain of sin, and that no other laver can fetch it out, but the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Some who have moral resolutions of amendment, dislike at least gross sins, and purpose to avoid them, and it is to them cleanness enough to reform in those things; but they consider not what becomes of the guiltiness they have contracted already, and how that shall be purged, how their natural pollution shall be taken away. Be not deceived in this: it is not a transient sigh, or a light word, or a wish of God forgive me: no, nor the highest current of repentance, nor that which is the truest evidence of repentance, amendment; it is none of these that purify in the sight of God, and expiate wrath; they are all imperfect, and stained themselves, cannot stand and answer for themselves, much less be of value to counterpoise the former guilt of sin. The very tears of the purest repentance, unless they be sprinkled with Christ's blood, are impure; all our washings without this, are but washings of the blackmoor, it is labour in vain. Jer. ii. 22. Job ix. 30, 31. There are none truly purified by the blood of Christ, who do not endeavour after purity of heart and conversation; but yet it is the blood of Christ by which they are all made fair, and there is no spot in them. Here it is said, 1 Pet. i. 2, *elect to obedience*; but because that obedience is not perfect, there must be sprinkling of the blood too. There is nothing in religion further out of Nature's reach, and out of its liking and believing, than the doctrine of redemption by a Saviour, and a crucified Saviour; by Christ, and by his blood, first shed on the cross in his suffering, and then sprinkled on the soul by his Spirit. It is easier to make men sensible of the necessity of repentance and amendment of life (though that is very difficult), than of this purging by the sprinkling of this precious blood. Did we see how needful Christ is to us, we should esteem and love him more.

It is not by the hearing of Christ and of his blood in the doctrine of the Gospel; it is not by the sprinkling of water, even

that water which is the sign of this blood, without the blood itself and the sprinkling of it. Many are present where it is sprinkled, and yet have no portion in it. Look to this, that this blood be sprinkled on your souls, that the destroying angel may pass by you. There is a generation (not some few, but a generation) deceived in this; they are their own deceivers, *pure in their own eyes*, Prov. xxx. 12. How earnestly doth David pray, *Wash me, purge me with hyssop!* Though bathed in tears, that satisfied not—*Wash thou me*, Psal. vi. 6. This is the honourable condition of the saints, that they are purified and consecrated unto God by this sprinkling; yea, they have on *long white robes washed in the blood of the Lamb*.

LEIGHTON.

You must be persuaded of this, that nothing cleanses you from sin, but the sprinkling of Christ's blood, and that this can do it effectually. When the stain of sin is seen upon people's consciences, there are a great many wells of water that the devil and the world dig up; they think to cleanse themselves in their duties, and in their performances, their vows, their purposes, their resolutions, their praying, reading, hearing, and meditating; these are used by a great many, just as water, to wash away the stain of sin on their consciences. Vain, dangerous, wicked ways! things not wicked in themselves, but most wicked as so used. Prayer is a duty, but to put prayer in Christ's place is an abomination. All the ordinances of the Gospel are things commanded us; but to use them so as to keep at a distance from this blood of sprinkling, is to pervert them to our destruction. It is a great matter to believe firmly, that nothing but this blood of sprinkling can justify and cleanse us; and it is also a great matter to believe that this can do it effectually. The poor creature thinks it is now about seventeen hundred years since Christ's blood was shed—and so it is; but what then? the virtue of it is everlasting, to cleanse us from all sin. *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*, 1 John i. 7. But, if you would come to this blood of sprinkling, that it may be upon you, you must adventure upon it, and place all your confidence in it, and make it your only plea for your acceptance and justification before God. *We are justified by his blood*, saith the

Apostle, Rom. v. 9. The believer is to see his justification streaming from the life-blood of the Son of God. When a poor creature sees the holiness of God's law, and the severity of his justice, and feels a disturbance in his own conscience, it is no easy matter to believe that the blood that was shed without the gates of Jerusalem, in the day when this great sacrifice was offered up, is able to wash away all our sins; and that we have nothing else to betake ourselves to: God would have nothing else. Christ tells his Father, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me*, Heb. x. 5. Burnt-offerings and sacrifices of the law, the Father would take none of these of Christ, but he took his own life; he took his own blood for the expiation of the sins of his people. REV. R. TRAILL.

The Blood of Christ as necessary to pardon Sins of weakness and ignorance, as the grossest crimes.

SEE then what absolute need we all stand in of Jesus Christ. Not only those amongst us whose lives have been openly gross and scandalous, but even those also who are the most circumspect and careful in their walkings. Though they do not wallow and roll themselves in the common pollutions of the world, yet it is not possible but that in so dirty a road they must be besparkled, and their garments spotted with the flesh. Absolute perfection is a state rather to be wished for than enjoyed in this life; the utmost we can here attain unto is not to commit presumptuous sins, nor to allow ourselves in any, when through infirmity we do commit them. But none of our sins, whether of presumption or of weakness, whether of ignorance, or against knowledge, whether the sins of our thoughts, or of our actions, can be pardoned without the blood of God, and the sufferings of our Almighty Saviour. It is the same precious blood that satisfied God's justice for the adultery and murder of David, the incest of Lot, the perjury of Peter, that must satisfy it likewise for thy vain and foolish thoughts, and rash and idle words, if ever thou art saved. *For without blood there is no remission*, Heb. ix. 22; and, without remission there can be no salvation. And, indeed, this is one of the great and main ends of giving the law, that the necessity and all-sufficiency of Christ to save us

may be rendered the more conspicuous. Thus saith the Apostle, Rom. x. 4, *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* The law was given us, not that we should seek justification by observance of it; but, finding it impossible to be justified by fulfilling of it, we should be thereby driven unto Christ's righteousness, who hath both fulfilled it in himself, and satisfied for our transgressing it. And therefore saith the same Apostle, Gal. iii. 24, *The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* To this end was it promulgated, that, seeing the multiplicity

and strictness of its commands, the rigour and utter insupportableness of its threatenings, and being withal sensibly convinced of our own weakness and impotency to fulfil the commands enjoined, and, thereupon, of our liableness to undergo the penalty threatened, we might thereby be frightened and terrified unto Christ, (as it were by the severe discipline of a schoolmaster,) to find that righteousness in him which may answer all the demands of the law, and which in ourselves we could not find. And whilst we make this use of the law, we bring it to be subservient to the Gospel.

BR. HOPKINS.

SECTION VII.—ON SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SELF-DEPENDENCE.

Evil of Self-righteousness.

THE Lord Jesus is *not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, Matt. ix. 13. If sinners only are admitted to salvation, why should we seek to enter in by our own righteousness, which is altogether either false or imaginary.

The human heart is never in a state to feel the effect of the mercy of God, till it is entirely divested of every idea of its own worthiness: for the mind cannot be engaged in this, without shutting the door against grace. And that no one should call this truth in question, the Lord Jesus was sent into the world with this commission, *To preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to comfort all that mourn; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness*, Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. And therefore he invites none to receive the fruits of his mercy, but those *that labour, and are heavy laden*, Matt. xi. 28. And in another place, he saith; *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, Matt. ix. 13.

Let us lay down this rule, which, though short, is however not the less general and certain; that he who has humbled, and entirely stripped himself of his own righteousness, which properly speaking is but a vain and deceitful shadow of righteousness, is rightly disposed to receive the

fruits of the grace of God. For the more any one depends on himself, the more does he hinder the course of God's mercy.

CALVIN.

Look well to yourselves, brethren, that the worm of self-righteousness eat not up all your religion, and leave you neither root nor branch. We must be stripped of all self-dependence; and when we are so stripped, we must turn to the Cross, with both an eager and a steady eye. It is there alone that Divine Justice is satisfied: there, therefore, we are to obtain peace and rest to our consciences; there we are to say, we have righteousness and strength.

But you hope that your repentance and your good meanings and sincere desires, together with Christ's merits, will save you: Is not this thought lurking in the hearts of many? Know, you must look wholly at Christ, or not at all. The crucified Jesus, the Holy One of Israel, is a pure, unmixed Saviour. You do not know what true repentance is, if you thus, as you evidently do, make a merit of your repentance: and, as to your good meanings and sincere desires, alas! alas! what shall I say to convince you of this most important, yet disagreeable and offensive truth,—that you have no such thing in your nature. To be brought to have a relish for what is good, to see a beauty in holiness, to be established in a course of sincere obedience to God, is the end and upshot of this business. It is the

very issue in which the healing virtue of Christ's blood must terminate.

Sincere obedience is, in short, that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord: this is its true character. Now, if any of you suppose that you have this in yourselves to begin your religion with, if you are already gotten to the uppermost step of the ladder that reaches to heaven, you can have no occasion for Christ. He did not come to save the sincere, or the upright, or the righteous,—Scripture words, which all mean much the same,—but he came, *to justify the ungodly, to save the lost, to quicken the dead.* If you are not of this class, you must make the best of your boasted qualifications and attainments, and try, whether this pretended sincerity be not at bottom pride and self-deception; try, whether it can, in the end, deliver you from everlasting destruction.

Ah! brethren, the lesson is irksome, but it is of the utmost moment, and must be learnt. It is my bounden duty repeatedly to inform you, that you must be brought to know and feel yourselves *by nature children of wrath*;—not sincere; not upright; not possessed of good meanings or good desires. The curse of curses,—the self-righteous principle in the heart, must be subdued; and, when you are thoroughly convinced of your unworthiness, you will have nothing of your own to plead; you will lay aside the Pharisee, and take up the Publican, and cry, *God be merciful to me a sinner!*

REV. JOS. MILNER.

Evil of Pride and Self-will.

BUT I wish it were not the distemper of our times to scare and fright men only with opinions, and make men only solicitous about the entertaining of this and that speculation, which will not render them any thing the better in their lives, or the liker unto God; whilst in the mean time there is no such care taken about keeping of Christ's commandments, and being renewed in our minds according to the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. We say, Lo, here is Christ, and Lo, there is Christ, in these and these opinions; whereas in truth Christ is neither here, nor there, nor any where, but where the Spirit of Christ, where the life of Christ is.

Do we not now-a-days open and lock up heaven with the private key of this or

that opinion of our own, according to our several fancies, as we please? and if any one observe Christ's commandments never so sincerely, and serve God with faith and a pure conscience, that yet haply skills not of some contended for opinions, some darling notions, he hath not the right Shibboleth, he hath not the true watchword, he must not pass the guards into heaven. Do we not make this and that opinion, this and that outward form, to be the wedding-garment, and boldly sentence those to outer darkness that are not invested therewith? whereas every true Christian finds the least dram of hearty affection towards God to be more cordial and sovereign to his soul than all the speculative notions and opinions in the world: and though he study also to inform his understanding aright, and free his mind from all error and misapprehensions; yet it is nothing but the life of Christ deeply rooted in his heart which is the chemical elixir that he feeds upon. Had he all faith that he could remove mountains (as St. Paul speaks), had he all knowledge, all tongues and languages; yet he prizeth one dram of love beyond them all. He accounteth him that feedeth upon mere notions in religion to be but an airy and cameleon-like Christian. He findeth himself now otherwise rooted and centred in God, than when he did before merely contemplate and gaze upon him: he tasteth and relisheth God within himself; he hath *quendam saporem Dei*, a certain savour of him; whereas before he did but rove and guess at random at him. He feeleth himself safely anchored in God, and will not be dissuaded from it, though perhaps he skill not many of those subtilities which others make the Alpha and Omega of their religion. Neither is he scared with those childish affrightments with which some would force their private conceits upon him; he is above the superstitious dreading of mere speculative opinions, as well as the superstitious reverence of outward ceremonies: he cares not so much for subtilty, as for soundness and health of mind. And indeed, as it was well spoken by a noble philosopher, *ἀνὴρ ἀπειρὴς θεὸς ὄνομα μόνον*, that 'without purity and virtue God is nothing but an empty name;' so it is as true here, that without obedience to Christ's commandments, without the life of Christ dwelling in us, whatsoever opinion we entertain of him, Christ is but only named by us, he is not *known*.

I speak not here against a free and ingenuous inquiry into all truth, according to our several abilities and opportunities; I plead not for the captivating and enthralling of our judgments to the dictates of men; I do not disparage the natural improvement of our understanding faculties by true knowledge, which is so noble and gallant a perfection of the mind: but the thing which I am against is, the dispiriting of all the life and vigour of our religion by dry speculations, and making it nothing but a mere dead skeleton of opinions, a few dry bones without any flesh and sinews tied up together, and the misplacing of all our zeal upon an eager prosecution of these, which should be spent to better purpose upon other objects.

Knowledge indeed is a thing far more excellent than riches, outward pleasures, worldly dignities, or any thing else in the world besides holiness, and the conformity of our wills to the will of God: but yet our happiness consisteth not in it, but in a certain divine temper and constitution of soul which is far above it.

But it is a piece of that corruption that runneth through human nature, that we naturally prize truth more than goodness, knowledge more than holiness. We think it a gallant thing to be fluttering up to heaven with our wings of knowledge and speculation: whereas the highest mystery of a divine life here, and of perfect happiness hereafter, consisteth in nothing but mere obedience to the Divine will. Happiness is but that inward sweet delight that will arise from the harmonious agreement between our wills and God's will.

There is nothing contrary to God in the whole world, nothing that fights against him, but self-will. This is the strong castle that we all keep garrisoned against heaven in every one of our hearts, which God continually layeth siege unto: and it must be conquered and demolished before we can conquer heaven. It was by reason of this self-will that Adam fell in Paradise; that those glorious angels, those morning-stars, kept not their first station, but dropt down from heaven like falling stars, and sunk into this condition of bitterness, anxiety and wretchedness in which now they are. They all intangled themselves with the length of their own wings; they would needs will more and otherwise than God would will in them: and going about to make their wills wider, and to enlarge them into greater amplitude, the

more they struggled, they found themselves the faster pinioned, and crowded up into narrowness and servility; insomuch, that now they are not able to use any wings at all; but inheriting the serpent's curse, can only creep with their bellies upon the earth. Now our only way to recover God and happiness again is, not to soar up with our understandings, but to destroy this self-will of ours; and then we shall find our wings to grow again, our plumes fairly spread, and ourselves raised aloft into the free air of perfect liberty, which is perfect happiness.

There is nothing in the whole world able to do us good or hurt but God and our own will; neither riches nor poverty, nor disgrace, nor honour, nor life nor death, nor angels, nor devils; but willing or not willing as we ought. Should hell itself cast all its fiery darts against us, if our will be right, if it be informed by the divine will, they can do us no hurt; we have then (if I may so speak) an enchanted shield that is impenetrable, and will bear off all. God will not hurt us, and hell cannot hurt us, if we will nothing but what God wills. Nay, then we are acted by God himself, and the whole divinity floweth in upon us; and when we have cashiered this self-will of ours, which did but shackle and confine our souls, our wills shall then become truly free, being widened and enlarged to the extent of God's own will. Hereby we know that we know Christ indeed, not by our speculative opinions concerning him, but by our keeping of his commandments.

CUDWORTH.

Of all the evils of our corrupt nature, there is none more connatural and universal than pride, the grand wickedness, self-exalting in our own and others' opinion. Though I will not contest what was the first step in that complicated first sin, yet certainly this of pride was one, and a main ingredient in it,—that which the unbelief conceived going before, and the disobedience following after, were both servants to; and ever since, it sticks still deep in our nature. St. Augustine says truly, 'That which first overcomes man, is the last thing he overcomes.' Some sins, comparatively, may die before us, but this hath life in it, sensibly, as long as we. It is as the heart of all, the first living, and the last dying; and it hath this advantage, that, whereas other sins are fomented by one

another, this feeds even on virtues and graces, as a moth that breeds in them, and consumes them, even in the finest of them, if it be not carefully looked to. This hydra, as one head of it is cut off, another rises up. It will secretly cleave to the best actions, and prey upon them. And therefore is there so much need that we continually watch, and fight, and pray against it, and be restless in the pursuit of real and deep humiliation, daily seeking to advance further in it; to be nothing, and to desire to be nothing; not only to bear, but to love our own abasement, and the things that procure and help it, to take pleasure in them, so far as may be without sin: yea, even in respect of our sinful failings, when they are discovered, to love the bringing low of ourselves by them, while we hate, and grieve for the sin of them.

And, above all, it is requisite to watch ourselves in our best things, that self get not in, or, if it break in, or steal in at any time, that it be presently found out and cast out again; to have that established within us, to do all for God, to intend him and his glory in all, and to be willing to advance his glory, were it by our own disgrace; not to make raising or pleasing thyself the rule of exercising thy parts and graces, when thou art called to use and bring them forth, but the good of thy brethren, and in that, the glory of thy Lord. Now, this is indeed to be severed from self and united to him, to have self-love turned into the love of God. And this his own work: it is above all other hands: therefore, the main combat against pride, and the conquest of it, and the gaining of humility, is certainly by prayer. God bestows himself upon them who are most abundant in prayer; and they to whom he shews himself most are certainly the most humble.

LEIGHTON.

Natural tendency of the Heart to Self-dependence.

EVERY man is naturally an idolater. Our hearts turned from God in our first fall, and ever since the creature hath been our God. This is the grand sin of nature. Every unregenerate man ascribes to the creature divine prerogatives, and allows it the highest room in his soul; or if he is convinced of misery, he flies to it as his Saviour. Indeed, God and his Christ shall be called Lord and Saviour; but the real

expectation is from the creature, and the work of God is laid upon it. Pleasure, profit, and honour, are the natural man's trinity, and his carnal self is these in unity. It was our first sin to aspire to be as gods; and it is the greatest sin that is propagated in our nature from generation to generation. When God should guide us, we guide ourselves; when he should be our Sovereign, we rule ourselves; the laws which he gave us we find fault with, and would correct; and if we had the making of them, we would have made them otherwise; when he should take care of us, (and must, or we perish) we will take care for ourselves; when we should depend on him in daily receivings, we had rather have our portion in our own hands; when we should submit to his providence, we usually quarrel at it, and think we could make a better disposal than God hath made. When we should study and love, trust and honour God, we study and love, trust and honour our carnal selves. Instead of God, we would have all men's eyes and dependence on us, and all men's thanks returned to us, and would gladly be the only men on earth extolled and admired by all. Thus we are naturally our own idols.

BAXTER.

Danger of Self-confidence.

SURELY every man, in his best estate, is altogether vanity.

Therefore it becometh us to be always humbled in the sight of ourselves, and to be jealous.

1. *Of our original impotency unto the doing of any good, unto the forbearing of any evil, unto the repelling of any temptation by our own power.* In his own might shall no man be strong, 1 Sam. ii. 9. To be a sinner, and to be without strength, are terms equivalent in the Apostle, Rom. v. 6. 8. Nay, even where there is a will to do good, there is a defect of power to perform it, Rom. vii. 18. Our strength is not in ourselves, but in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and in the working of his Spirit in our inner man, Ephes. vi. 10; iii. 19; Phil. iv. 13. If but a good thought arise in our mind, or a good desire and motion be stirring in our heart, or a good word drop from our lips, we have great cause to take notice of the grace of God that offered it to us, and wrought it in us, and to admire how any of the fruit of Paradise could grow in so heathy a wilderness.

II. *Of our natural antipathy and reluctance unto holy duties.*—Our aptness to draw back towards perdition; to refuse and thrust away the offers and motions of grace; our rebellion, which ariseth from the law of the members against the law of the mind; the continual droppings of a corrupt heart upon any of the tender buds and sproutings of piety that are wrought within us; our aptness to be weary of the yoke, and to shake off the burden of Christ from our shoulders, Isa. xliii. 22; our natural levity and inconstancy of spirit in any holy resolutions, continuing as a morning dew, which presently is dried up; beginning in the spirit and ending in the flesh, having interchangeable fits of the one and the other. . . .

III. *Of the manifold decays and abatements of the grace of God in us,* our aptness to leave our first love, Rev. ii. 4. How did Hezekiah fall into an impolitic vainglory, in showing all his treasures unto the ambassadors of a foreign prince, thereby kindling in him a desire to be master of so rich a land, as soon as God left him unto himself! 2 Kings xx. 12, 13. How quickly, without continual husbandry, will a garden or vineyard be wasted, and overgrown with weeds! How easily is a ship, when it is at the very shore, carried with a storm back into the sea again! How quickly will a curious watch, if it lie open, gather dust into the wheels, and be out of order! Though, therefore, thou have found sweetness in religion, joy in the Holy Spirit, comfort, yea, heaven in good duties, power against corruptions, strength against temptations, triumph over afflictions, assurance of God's favour, vigour, life, and great enlargement of heart in the ways of godliness; yet for all this be not high-minded, but fear. Remember the flower that is wide open in the morning, when the sun shines upon it, may be shut up in the evening before night come. If the sun had not stood still, Joshua had not taken vengeance on the enemy, Josh. x. 13; and if the Sun of Righteousness do not constantly shine upon us, and supply us, we shall not be able to pursue and carry on any victorious affections. While God *openeth his hand*, thou art *filled*; but if he *withdraw his face*, thou wilt be *troubled* again, Psalm civ. 28, 29. Therefore take heed of resting on thine own wisdom or strength. Thou mayest, after all this, grieve the Spirit of God, and cause him to depart and hide himself from thee: thou

mayest fall from thy steadfastness, and lose thy wonted comforts: thou mayest have a dead winter upon the face of thy conscience, and be brought to such a sad and disconsolate condition, as to conclude that God hath cast thee out of his sight, that he hath forgotten to be gracious, and hath shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure; to roar out for anguish of spirit, as one whose bones are broken: thy soul may draw nigh to the grave, and thy life to the destroyers, and thou mayest find it a woful and a most insuperable difficulty to recover thy life and strength again. It was so with Job, x. 16, 17. xiii. 26—28. Psalm xxx. 15—31. It was so with David, Psalm li. 8. It was so with Heman, and divers others, Psalm lxxxviii. Job xxxiii. 2, 3. 13. 15. Lamentations iii. Therefore we should still remember in a calm to provide for a storm; to stir up the graces of God continually in ourselves, that they be not quenched; so to rejoice in the Lord, as withal to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; never to let the grace of God puff us up, or make us forgetful of our own weakness; but, as the Apostle saith of himself, in regard of God's grace, *When I am weak, then am I strong*; so to say of ourselves, in regard of our own natural corruption, *When I am strong, then I am weak*.

But this must not so humble us as to deject and dismay us, or make us give over the hope of holding out to the end, when our nature is so weak, our enemies so strong, our temptations so many; but we must withal be quickened by these considerations, with prayer to implore, and with faith to rely on, and draw strength from, the word and grace of God; to have always the window of the soul open towards the Sun of Righteousness, whereby the supplies of his grace to prevent, excite, assist, follow, establish us, and carry on every good thing which he hath begun for us, may be continually admitted. This is one of the most necessary duties for a Christian, to hold constant and fixed purposes in godliness: the Scripture frequently calls upon us for them, that *with purpose of heart we should cleave unto God*; that we should *continue in the grace of God*: that we should be *rooted and grounded in love*: that we would *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*: that we would be *steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the*

work of the Lord: that we should look to ourselves, that we may not lose the things which we have wrought: that we would hold fast and keep the works of Christ unto the end. And it is that which godly men are most earnestly solicitous about, and do strive unto with greatest importunity. *I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress,* Psalm xvii. 3. *Unite my heart to fear thy name,* Psalm lxxxvi. 11. *My heart is fixed to God; my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise,* Psalm lvii. 7. Therefore in this case it is necessary for us to draw nigh unto God, who only can ratify all our pious resolutions: *Who giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no power increaseth strength,* Isa. xl. 29; who only can *settle and stablish the hearts of men,* 1 Pet. v. 10. The conscience of our duty, the sense of our frailty, the power, malice, and cunning of our enemies, the obligation of our covenant, should direct the soul perpetually unto God for the supply of his grace, that that may, in all our weaknesses, be sufficient for us, and *hold us up that we may be safe,* as the Psalmist speaks, Psalm cxix. 117: and that we may never, through infirmity or unstableness of spirit, violate our own resolutions.

BP. REYNOLDS.

Let us then look upon St. Peter in the high priest's palace. St. Peter, not only an Apostle, but one of that number singled out for a companion of our Lord's privacies, admitted to the honour of his most intimate friendship, and, upon all occasions hitherto, expressing his sense of these uncommon favours, by all possible instances of gratitude, and love, and more than common zeal. He was drawn hither at this very time, most probably, from an affectionate concern for his master. Here he resolutely ventured his person, notwithstanding his behaviour in the garden just before, when wounding the high priest's servant, must needs have exposed him, more than all the rest of his brethren, to the danger of being observed, and ill-treated by them, who dealt so barbarously by his Lord. But, alas! this St. Peter was presently so changed from what he had been, that, terrified with the impertinence of an inquisitive servant, he disowned, and denied Jesus; repeated that denial thrice; repeated it after sufficient space for recollection, and at last bound the lie upon

his soul, with solemn oaths, and dreadful imprecations.

Ah! where was now that gallant faith, which made so glorious a confession of this Jesus being the *Christ, the Son of the living God?* St. Matt. xvi. 16. Where that eager courage, that did not fear to meet his Lord, walking upon the sea? Where that bold promise, that though *all should be offended,* and leave their dear Lord in his distress, yet *would he never be offended?* Mark xiv. 29. Where that becoming resolution, *Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee in any wise?* Matt. xxvi. 35. Where all that fire and intrepidity, which, but a very little while ago, had singly engaged a whole band of armed men, in hope to rescue the Lord he now abjures? What shall we say to such advantages, such warnings, such proofs of affection, such boasted firmness of mind, such desperate attempts, all lost and forgotten, upon the silly surmises of a servant or two, without any formal accusation brought, without any hand laid on him? What two men ever differed more from one another, than this man, in an hour or two, differed from himself? From what himself had oft been proved, and had continued all along, till that very hour or two: from what he hoped, and believed he should, and no doubt intended fully to continue, to the last moment of his life?

Yet so sudden, so prodigious an alteration our Lord foretold and permitted; and such he thought fit we should be acquainted there was, in this great man. Wisely to be sure; as for other reasons, so particularly for these. That this example might effectually convince us, how frail even the best are, how little masters of their own passions, how unfit to undertake for themselves, even when their desires of doing well are most fervent, and their resolutions most sincere. In short, how vain all confidences in our own strength and virtue must needs be, which, by tempting us to imagine we are something, provoke God to withdraw that grace, the necessity whereof we do not then sufficiently apprehend, and so by woful experience make us feel that in truth we are nothing.

This fall of St. Peter, however, as it ought to be applied for a necessary mortification of our vanity; so may it likewise serve us, for a support under our frailties and temptations. But then this is a comfort, which can be regularly administered

to none, except to them who are careful to be like him in that repentance, whereof we have also an account in the Scripture now under consideration.

DEAN STANHOPE.

Watch and Pray, lest ye enter into Temptation.

EVEN in our best estate, when we think ourselves most free from danger of temptation, yea, when we find ourselves most strong by the strength of grace and faith to withstand the assaults and temptations of Satan, or his instruments, labouring to beguile us, and to draw us to error in judgment, to lust of heart, or to any sinful action; even then are we to be vigilant, circumspect and wary, and to watch over our own hearts and lives. The Apostle was careful to keep the Colossians from seducement, when he knew them well ordered and steadfast in faith: so must we in our best and most secure estate (as it may seem to us) fear, and be careful to avoid the danger of temptation. The Apostle saith to such as stand by faith, *Be not high-minded, but fear*, Rom. xi. 20; and, *let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*, 1 Cor. x. 12; which places make nothing against assurance of salvation in true believers, as the Papists urge them, but are admonitions to stir them up to use means of securing themselves, by wariness, and do prove the point in hand, that even then, when we stand, and are steadfast in faith, we are with all circumspection to avoid the danger of temptation: if we call to mind the place where, and the time when our first parents were deceived, we shall easily yield to the necessity of this duty. The place where they were tempted, seduced, and overthrown, was Paradise; the time when, in their state of innocency.

In that our first parents were tempted and fell in Paradise, in time of their innocency, it makes it most clear, that in our best estate we are not to be secure and think ourselves free, (I say not from temptation,) but from the danger of temptation; and therefore in our best estate, when we have most strength of grace, we are to be vigilant, and to watch over ourselves, lest Satan circumvents us. We see our duty, and (that it may be thought upon with profit) we must know that when Satan cannot prevail with us to make us commit gross sins, we having strength of grace to with-

stand him, when he cannot make us to sin by swearing, drunkenness, pride in apparel, or other like fruits of ignorance, and of an unreformed soul; then he will assail us with some spiritual temptation: for example, he will seek to poison our souls with inward pride, to make us (if possibly he can) to swell, and to be lift up in regard of that very grace given to withstand temptation: we therefore (even as many as make conscience of known sins) are to watch over our hearts in this respect, lest Satan get within our hearts, and by his subtilty (ere we be aware) corrupt them with this secret pride; and consider, that it is not enough for us to disallow this corruption: as haply at the hearing of this exhortation, some will say, 'O, God forbid I should so forget myself, as to think highly of that strength God hath given me, and to be lift up with a conceit of that; I know it to be a sin, and I utterly disallow it:' consider, I say, that this is not sufficient; the devil will suffer us to go thus far. As in judgment we disallow it, so in affection we must humble ourselves in fear and prayer before the Lord; knowing this, that at one time or other, we may be tempted and solicited by Satan to this sin of secret pride; and if in judgment only we disallow it, and be not humbled in fear and prayer against it, we shall not be able to stand in time of temptation: our Saviour therefore hath taught us, and he often repeats it, that we are to watch and pray, that we fall not into temptation. It is worth our marking, that he saith, Mark xiii. 33, *Take heed, or look, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is*; as if he had said, it is not enough for you to look about you, to espy this or that sin, but you are to watch over yourselves in regard of temptation to it; yea, to be humbled in fear and prayer, that you may be strengthened against it.

REV. E. ELTON.

Self-sufficiency and self-dependence are the most natural and most destructive of all sins. We are never poorer than when we think we are rich in ourselves; nor ever in more danger of falling than when we think we stand. Such thoughts as these greatly weaken every grace and strengthen every corruption. I have found this truth verified in my own experience lately, and that to my great sorrow: *He that trusteth his own heart is a fool*, even when his heart is in its best, its most heavenly and

spiritual frame. When we feel the graces of the Spirit working with some degree of strength, the Lord only can keep us from depending on *them*, instead of on him who is the strength of his people. If faith exerts itself in some small degree, in what danger do I find myself of making my faith my saviour. To depend, in the midst of all my comforts, joys, or triumphs, as a weak, helpless, guilty sinner, on an All-sufficient Saviour, is not an easy thing. This is one reason, I believe, why my seasons of comfort are generally of but short continuance. I soon begin to live on the fulness within myself, and not on the fulness laid up in Christ for my use. *The just shall live by faith*; and when he seeks to live otherwise than by faith, his life immediately begins to decay, his strength waxes feeble, his vigour languishes, his joys depart, and his soul gets lean and barren. To live by faith is a strange, mysterious, and supernatural life, that no creature in the universe knows any thing of, but the believer; and it is not without the greatest difficulty that even he is brought to make any proficiency in it. I am never out of danger. Lord, keep me! REV. T. CHARLES.

How Self-righteousness may exist with high professions of Self-renunciation.

THERE are some professors who are fluent in talking against legal doctrines, legal preaching, and a legal spirit, who little understand what they exclaim against. A legal spirit is a more subtle thing than they imagine: it is too subtle for them. It lurks, and operates, and prevails in their hearts, and they are most deeply possessed with it, at the time that they are inveighing against it. So far as a man is not emptied of himself, and of his own righteousness, in every form and shape, so far he is of a legal spirit. A spirit of pride as to our faith, humility, affections, experience, righteousness, or holiness, is a legal spirit. It was not pride in Adam before his fall, to be of a legal spirit; because in the circumstances in which he was placed, he might seek acceptance with God by his own righteousness. But a legal spirit, in a fallen creature, can be nothing but spiritual pride; and, on the contrary, a proud spirit, however modified, is a legal spirit. Every man who is lifted up by an elevated opinion of his experience, trusts in that

experience, and makes a righteousness of it; whatever humble language he may use with respect to himself, and though he attribute his discoveries to the operations of divine grace, and even call upon others to glorify God for them. He who is proud of his experience, arrogates something to himself, as though his experience were a kind of dignity of his own. And if he regards it as conferring upon him a sort of importance, he believes that God views it in the same light; for he, of course, thinks his own judgment of it correct, and consequently supposes that God regards it as he does. And thus he trusts to what he himself possesses, to recommend him to God; and with this encouragement he goes before God in prayer, expecting much from him. This makes him think that Christ loves him, and that he has clothed him with the garment of salvation. This, in an eminent degree, is living on his own righteousness, and persons who thus live are in the high road to everlasting perdition. Deluded creatures! they think that they appear amiable in the eyes of God, when they are *a smoke in his nose*; and many of them, more odious than the most profligate persons who made no pretensions to religion!

There are professors who exclaim against legality, and talk much about faith as opposed to works; who exalt themselves as more evangelical in their sentiments than their brethren; but who are indeed among the greatest enemies of the doctrines of free grace, and the most dangerous opposers of pure Christianity.

There is a pretended humility,—a professed deadness to the law, which is one of the proudest things in the world. There are some persons who make great professions of having experienced a thorough work of the law on their hearts, and of being brought fully from dependence on their own works; whose conversation savours more of a self-righteous spirit, than that of any other description of persons with whom I have had an opportunity of being acquainted. And some who think themselves quite emptied of self, and abased in the dust, are as full as possible of pride: they are lifted up with a high opinion of their humility and self-abasement. Their humility, to use very improper terms, is a confident, showy, assuming humility. It appears to be the nature of spiritual pride, to make professors ostentatious with respect to this grace.

To be truly emptied of self,—to be poor in spirit,—to be broken in heart, is quite another thing, and has quite other effects from what many persons imagine. It is astonishing to observe, how many are deceived about themselves, as to this matter, imagining that they are very humble, when they are very proud, and their behaviour very haughty. The deceitfulness of the human heart appears in nothing so much, as in spiritual pride, and self-righteousness. The subtlety of Satan is most eminent in his management of persons as to these sins. Here perhaps he has most experience: he is acquainted with the secret springs of pride: it was his own prevailing sin.

PRES. EDWARDS.

Folly of Glorifying in our good Hearts and Intentions.

MEN are apt to glory of their good hearts and intentions, only because they cannot search them; and, being carnal themselves, to entertain none but carnal notions of God's service. But if they knew the purity and jealousy of God, and their own impotency to answer so holy a will, they would lay their hands upon their mouths, and with Job, abhor themselves; and with Isaiah, bewail the uncleanness of their lips; and with Moses, fear and quake, as not being able to endure the things that are commanded; and with Joshua, acknowledge that they cannot serve God because he is holy. They would then remember, that *The law of God is a law of fire*, Deut. xxxiii. 2; and *the tribunal of God, a tribunal of fire*, Ezek. i. 27; that *the pleadings of God with sinners are in flames of fire*, Isa. lxvi. 15, 16; that *the trial of all our works shall be by fire*, 1 Cor. iii. 13; that *the God before whom we must appear is a consuming fire*, Heb. xii. 29. Go now, and bring thy straw and stubble, thy drowsy and sluggish devotion, thy fickle and flattering repentance, thy formal and demure service into the fire, to the law to measure them, to the judge to censure them; nay, now carry them to thine own conscience; and tell me whether that will not pass the Father's verdict upon them, 'Sordet in conspectu judicis, quod fulget in conspectu operantis,' That which is fair in thine eye, is filthy in God's.

BR. REYNOLDS.

The wise man saith, in Prov. xxi, *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes.*

ANTH.

Who should think it possible, that every individual could be satisfied with himself, and think himself in the right way? But consult experience; consider mankind, before they had received grace, and you will always find them pleased with themselves, ready to defend their conduct, and justify their behaviour. Do we not see persons in the world, whom decency prevents from boasting of their penetration, sense and insight, lest they should be charged with presumption and pride; who nevertheless have not the least scruple of speaking favourably of themselves, and endeavouring to persuade others, that they are at least endowed with some moral goodness. Whereas, in fact, the understanding is less to be blamed than the heart, which is evil from our youth (Gen. viii. 21; Matt. xv. 19). When we receive grace, the first change it effects is, to teach us to abhor ourselves, and to condemn our heart and conduct, in every respect.—So true it is, that we do not know ourselves, particularly with regard to the concerns of the heart. What a pity! How blind are we on this head! It is a common saying, 'I value myself upon nothing so much, as on having a good heart.' I have my faults, I have no great abilities, I am at times too fond of this or the other thing, but in the bottom, *I have a good heart.*' A good heart? Alas! it is that which deceives you, it is the worst part in you.

SUPERVILLE.

The Evil of the Heart unknown till Temptation exposes it.

MEN little think how weak they are, until God permits them to fall into such circumstances, as to give scandalous proofs of their weakness and irresolution. How often had our blessed Lord declared to his disciples the weakness of their nature, and they would not believe it? Peter contradicted his Master time after time, and thought, that though he could not be answerable for his brethren, yet he could vouch for himself that he would bear his Master company to prison and to death; and with this sanguine presumption he also inflamed the rest of the disciples, so that they all made the like protestation. But what they would not believe, they were to experience to their sorrow. Thus also is it with many Christians, whose natural self-love is a flattering mirror, which exhibits a much more beautiful appearance than

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they in reality have. We entertain such an high opinion of our own hearts, that we think them proof against every attack. The secret delusion that lurks in the heart, we are not willing to hear of. Thus, there is no end of palliatives; and every one of us industriously gathers fig-leaves to cover his own nakedness. We confidently venture ourselves in so many conjunctures, which may be an occasion of falling; and yet, at other times, we are ready to plead the frailty of human nature, when we are exhorted to greater earnestness in religion. The measures that God takes for bringing such persons to a knowledge of themselves, and their inability, is, to permit them to fall into such circumstances, as will lay open the inmost recesses of their hearts; and, for their amendment, to suffer them to commit such faults, as must evidently show them that their hearts are not so sound as they imagine. Happy is he, who abases himself in the spirit of real humility, so that God has no occasion to humble him. . . .

Possibly many, who read this, may say, 'Had I been in Peter's place, I should have showed more courage and resolution than to be so shamefully foiled by a servant-maid, as to deny my Saviour.' But to such persons it may be justly answered, 'Thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.' Whoever argues in this manner little knows his own heart; and his strength, in the hour of temptation, will be little answerable to the fond opinion he conceives of it.

RAMBACH.

True Satisfaction in a dependent frame of Mind.

THE thoughts of living at the will and pleasure of another are grating; but they are only grating to a proud heart, which here hath no place. A soul naturalised to humiliations, accustomed to prostrations and self-abasements, trained up in acts of mortification, and that was brought to glory through a continued course and series of self-denial; that ever since it first came to know itself was wont to depend for every moment's breath, for every glimpse of light, for every fresh influence, *I live, yet not I*, Gal. ii. 20, with what pleasure doth it now, as it were, vanish before the Lord! what delight doth it take to diminish itself, and as it were, disap-

pear; to contract and shrivel up itself, to shrink even into a point, into a nothing, in the presence of the divine glory, that it may be all in all!

The magnifying and exalting of God is the most connatural thing to the holy soul; the most fundamental and deeply impressed law of the new creature. Self gives place that God may take it; becomes nothing that he may be all; it vanishes that his glory may shine the brighter. Dependence gives God his proper glory. It is the peculiar honour and prerogative of a Deity to have a world of creatures hanging upon it, staying themselves upon it; to be the fulcrum, the centre of a lapsing creation.

How unspeakably pleasant to a holy soul will such a perpetual agnition or acknowledgment of God be! when the perpetuation of its being shall be nothing else than a perpetuation of this acknowledgment; when every renewed aspiration, every motion, every pulse of the glorified soul, shall be but a repetition of it; when it shall find itself in the eternity of life, that everlasting state of life which it now possesses, to be nothing else than an everlasting testimony that God is God. He is so; for I am, I live, I act, I have the power to love him, none of which could otherwise be. When amongst the innumerable myriads of the heavenly host, this shall be the mutual, alternate testimony of each to all the rest throughout eternity, will not this be pleasant? When each shall feel continually the fresh illapses and incomes of God, the power and sweetness of Divine influences, the enlivening vigour of that vital breath, and find in themselves, thus we live and are sustained; and are yet as secure, touching the continuance of this state of life, as if every one were a god to himself, and did each one possess an entire godhead.

REV. J. HOWE.

As we can do nothing of ourselves the praise of all we do should be ascribed to God.

THESE same good works which the Lord works in us, he is content to ascribe them to us, and calls them ours. Of ourselves, we must say with the Apostle, *We are not sufficient of ourselves to think so much as a good thought*, Phil. ii. 12. Our sufficiency is of God, and it is he who worketh in us both the will and the deed: so be

works in us, that he makes us through his grace willing workers with him: through him that strengthens us we are able to do all things, and therefore the praise of all the good we can do should be ascribed unto God. When David had offered to God abundance of silver and gold, and other metals, which he had prepared for the house of God, he concludes in the humility of his heart, *What am I, O Lord, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee*, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. But much more when we do any work of sanctification, for the building of ourselves up into a spiritual temple to the Lord our God, we may say, O Lord, all the good we can do, is of thee, and of thine own hand we have given back unto thee; for except thou, Lord, hadst given unto us grace, we should never have given to thee obedience.

Let therefore the presumptuous conceit of merit, yet again, be far from us; seeing the good which we do is debt, and is done also by the Spirit of the Lord in us, let us reserve the glory thereof unto him. 'Quære dona mea, non merita tua, quia si ego quærerem merita tua, non venires ad dona mea.' Seek my gifts (saith Augustine, speaking in the name of the Lord) not thy merits, for if I should seek thy merits, thou shouldest never be partaker of my gifts. When the Apostle St. Paul had reckoned out, how he had laboured more abundantly in the work of the ministry than all the rest of the Apostles, he subjoins, as it were, by correction, *yet not I, but the grace of God in me*, 1 Cor. xv. 10; teaching us, when we have done all the good we can, to be humble in ourselves, and give the glory to God: if he promise us a crown, 'nihil coronat nisi dona sua,' he crowns no other thing but his own gifts: if by promise he binds himself a debtor unto us to give us a reward, 'Debitor factus est nobis, non aliquid a nobis accipiendo, sed quod ille placuit promittendo.' He is become a debtor unto us, not by receiving any thing from us, but by promising freely to us that which pleased him: and therefore, when we are exhorted to mortify the deeds of the body by the Spirit, let us first turn this and the like of these precepts into prayers, that the Lord would enable us by grace to do that which he commands us, and then when in some

measure we have done it, that we return the praise and glory to the Lord.

BP. COWPER.

Too much Importance attached to human Agency.

Is it not strange to observe how carefully some philosophers, who deplore the condition of the world, and profess to expect its amelioration, keep their speculations clear of every idea of Divine Interposition? No builders of houses or cities were ever more attentive to guard against the access of inundation or fire. If He should but touch their prospective theories of improvement, they would renounce them, as defiled and fit only for vulgar fanaticism. Their system of Providence would be profaned by the intrusion of the Almighty. Man is to effect an apotheosis for himself, by the hopeful process of exhausting his corruptions. And should it take all but an endless series of ages, vices, and woes, to reach this glorious attainment, patience may sustain itself the while by the thought that when it is realised, it will be burdened with no duty of religious gratitude. No time is too long to wait, no cost too deep to incur, for the triumph of proving that we have no need of that one attribute of a Divinity, which creates the grand interest in acknowledging such a Being, the benevolence that would make us happy. But even if this triumph should be found unattainable, the independence of spirit which has laboured for it, must not at last sink into piety. This afflicted world, 'this poor terrestrial citadel of man,' is to lock its gates, and keep its miseries, rather than admit the degradation of receiving help from God.

I wish it were not true that even men who firmly believe in the general doctrine of the Divine government of the world, are often betrayed into the impiety of attaching an excessive importance to human agency in its events. How easily a creature of their own species is transformed by a sympathetic pride into a god before them! If what they deem the cause of truth and justice, advances with a splendid front of distinguished names of legislators, or patriots, or military heroes, it must then, and must therefore triumph; nothing can withstand such talents, accompanied by the zeal of so many faithful adherents. If these shining insects of fame are crushed, or sink into the despicable reptiles of

corruption, alas, then, for the cause of truth and justice! All this while, there is no solemn reference to the 'Blessed and only Potentate.' If, however, the foundations of their religious faith have not been shaken, and they possess any docility to the lessons of time, they will after a while be taught to withdraw their dependence and confidence from all subordinate agents, and habitually regard the Supreme Being as the only power in the creation.

It strikes me as not improbable, that the grand moral improvements of a future age may be accomplished in a manner that shall leave nothing to man but humility and grateful adoration. His pride so obstinately ascribes to himself whatever good is effected on the globe, that perhaps the Deity will evince his own interposition, by events as evidently independent of human power as the rising of the sun. Perhaps some of them may take place in a manner but little connected even with human operation. Or if the activity of men shall be employed as the means of producing all of them, there will probably be as palpable a disproportion between the instruments and the events, as there was between the rod of Moses and the stupendous phenomena which followed its being stretched forth. No Israelite was foolish enough to ascribe to the rod the power that divided the sea; nor will any witness of the moral wonders to come attribute them to man. . .

I should deem a train of observations of the melancholy hue which shades some of the latter pages of this essay, useless, or perhaps even noxious, were I not convinced that a serious exhibition of the feebleness of human agency in relation to all great objects, might aggravate the impression, often so faint, of the absolute supremacy of God, of the total dependence of all mortal effort on him, and of the necessity of devoutly regarding his intervention at every moment. It might promote that last attainment of a zealously good man, the resignation to be as diminutive an agent as God pleases, and as unsuccessful a one. I am assured also that, in a pious mind, the humiliating estimate of means and human power, and the consequent sinking down of all lofty expectations founded on them, will leave one single mean, and that far the best of all, to be

held not only of undiminished but of more eminent value than ever was ascribed to it before. The noblest of all human means must be that which obtains the exertion of Divine power. The means which, introducing no foreign agency, are applied directly and immediately to their objects, seem to bear such a defined proportion to those objects, as to assign and limit the probable effect. This strict proportion exists no longer, and therefore the possible effects become too great for calculation, when that expedient is solemnly employed, which is appointed as the mean of engaging the Divine energy to act on the object. If the only means by which Jehoshaphat sought to overcome his superior enemy had been his troops, horses, and arms, the proportion between these means and the end would have been perfectly assignable, and the probable result of the conflict a matter of ordinary calculation. But when he said *Neither know we what to do, but our eyes are up unto thee*, he moved (I speak it reverently) a new and infinite force to evade the host of Moab and Ammon; and the consequence displayed in their camp the difference between an irreligious leader, who could fight only with arms and on the level of the plain, and a pious one, who could thus assault from heaven. It may not, I own, be perfectly correct, to cite, in illustration of the efficacy of prayer, the most wonderful ancient examples. Nor is it needful, since the experience of devout and eminently rational men, in latter times, has supplied a great number of striking instances of important advantages so connected with prayer, that they deemed them the evident result of it. This experience, taken in confirmation of the assurances of the Bible, warrants ample expectations of the efficacy of an earnest and habitual devotion; provided still, as I need not remind you, that this mean be employed as the grand auxiliary of the other means, and not alone, till all the rest are exhausted or impracticable. And I am convinced that every man who, amidst his serious projects, is apprised of his dependence on God, as completely as that dependence is a fact, will be impelled to pray, and anxious to induce his serious friends to pray, almost every hour.

FOSTER.

SECTION VIII.—ON REPENTANCE.

Nature of Repentance.

THE first question in repentance is, *What have I done?* Jer. viii. 6; and the next question is, *What shall I do?* Acts ix. 6. And this care repentance worketh:

First; *by a godly sorrow for sin past.* It brings into a man's remembrance the history of his former life; makes him, with heaviness of spirit, recount the guilt of so many innumerable sins, wherewith he hath bound himself as with chains of darkness; the loss of so much precious time, mispent in the service of such a master, as had no other wages to give but shame and death; the horrible indignities thereby offered to the majesty and justice of God; the odious contempt of his holy will, and sovereign authority; the daring neglect of his threatening, and undervaluing of his rewards; the high provocation of his jealousy and displeasure; the base corrivalry and contesting of filthy lusts with the grace of the Gospel, and the precious blood of the Son of God; the gainsaying, and wrestling, and stubborn antipathy of a carnal heart to the pure motions of the Spirit and word of Christ; the presumptuous repulses of him that standeth at the door and knocks, waiting that he may be gracious; the long turning of his back, and thrusting away from him the word of reconciliation, wherein Christ, by his ambassadors, had so often beseeched him to be reconciled unto God:—the remembrance of these things makes a man look with self-aborrancy upon himself, and full detestation upon his former courses. And he now no longer considers the silver or the gold, the profit or the pleasure of his wonted lusts:—though they be never so delectable or desirable in the eye of flesh, he looks upon them as accursed things to be thrown away, as the converts did upon their costly and curious books, Acts xix. 19; Isaiah xxx. 22, xxxi. 7. Sin is like a painted picture: on the one side of it, to the impatient, appeareth nothing but the beauty of pleasure, whereby it bewitcheth and allureth them; on the other side to the penitent appeareth nothing but the horrid and ugly face of guilt and shame, whereby it amazeth and confoundeth them. Thus the remembrance of sin past (which they are very careful to keep

always in their sight) doth, by godly sorrow, work especial care of amendment of life for the time to come, 2 Chron. vi. 37, 38; Psalm cxix. 59; Ezek. xvi. 61—63, xx. 43.

Secondly; *by a present sense of the weight and burden of remaining corruptions*, which work, and move, and put forth what strength they can, to resist the grace of God in us. As the time past wherein sin reigned, so the present burden of sin besetting us, is esteemed sufficient, and makes a man careful not to load himself wilfully with more, being ready to sink, and forced to cry out under the pain of those which he unwillingly lieth under already. A very glutton when he is in a fit of the gout or stone, will forbear those meats which feed so painful diseases: a penitent sinner is continually in pain under the body of sin; and therefore dares not feed so dangerous and tormenting a disease. The more spiritual any man is, the more painful and burdensome is corruption to him, Rom. vii. 22. For sin to the new man is as sickness to the natural man. The more exquisite and delicate the natural senses are, the more are they sensible and affected with that which offends nature. Contraries cannot be together without combat. The spirit will lust against the flesh, and not suffer a man to fulfil the lusts of it, Gal. v. 16, 17. The seed of God will keep down the strength of sin, 1 John iii. 9.

Thirdly; *by a holy jealousy, and godly fear of the fulseness and backsliding of our corrupt heart*; lest, like Lot's wife, it should look back towards Sodom; and, like Israel, have a mind hankering after the flesh-pots of Egypt, the wonted profits and pleasures of forsaken lusts. A godly heart prizeth the love of God, and the feelings of spiritual comfort, from thence arising, above all other things; and is afraid to lose them. It hath felt the burnings of sin; the stinging of these fiery serpents; and hath often been forced to befool itself, and to beshrew its own ignorance, and, with Ephraim, to smite upon the thigh. And as the burnt child dreads the fire, and dares not meddle any more with it, so the renewed heart considers the heaviness of God's frown, the rigour of his law, the weakness and fickleness of the

heart of man, the difficulty of finding Christ out when he hath withdrawn himself, and of recovering light and peace again, when the soul hath wilfully brought itself under a cloud; and therefore will not venture to harden itself against God. Thus godly fear keeps men from sin.

Fourthly; *by a love to Christ, and a sweet recounting of the mercies of God in him.* The less a man loves sin, the more he shall love Christ. Now repentance works a hatred of sin, and thereupon a love of Christ; which love is evermore operative, and putting forth itself towards holiness of life. As the love of God in Christ towards us worketh forgiveness of sin; so our reciprocal love, wrought by the feeling and comfort of that forgiveness, worketh in us a hatred of sin. A direct love begets a reflect love, as the heat, wrought in the earth, strikes back a heat into the air again. The woman in the Gospel, *having much forgiven her, loved much*, Luke vii. 47. *We love him because he loved us first*; and love will not suffer a man to wrong the things which he loves. What man ever threw away jewels or money, when he might have kept them, except when the predominant love of something better made these things comparatively hateful? Luke xiv. 26. What woman would be persuaded to throw away her sucking child from her breast unto swine or dogs to devour it? Our love to Christ and his law will not suffer us to cast him off, or to throw his law behind our backs. Now obedience is ever joined unto pardon of sin and repentance for it, by the method of God's decrees, by the order and chain of salvation; and ariseth out of the internal character and disposition of a child of God. We are not sons only by adoption, appointed to a new inheritance; but we are sons by regeneration also, partakers of a new nature, designed unto a new life, joined unto a new head, descended from a new Adam; unto whom, therefore, we are, in the power of his resurrection, and in the fellowship of his sufferings, to be made conformable, Phil. iii. 10.

BP. REYNOLDS.

Repentance a New Creation.

IN that David craves a clean heart may be created in him, he acknowledgeth that his sin hath not only wounded him, but slain him, and that he stood in need not of any reparation, but of a new creation,

wherein he utterly distrusteth the power of his nature: yea, the ability of his own free will, notwithstanding grace once resumed, he finds it so oppressed by the power of his corruption, that he is forced to crave from God the benefit of a new creation. Of ourselves we fall, but of ourselves we rise not again. Not only is our first conversion a work of God's grace altogether and alone; but the works of our restitution by repentance, after we have fallen: as it is in the Lord's praise, *He quickened us, when we were dead*: so is it his praise, that *he keeps our souls in life.* *The Lord made us; we made not ourselves*, Psal. c. We are content to give him the glory of our first creation, let us also give him the glory of our second creation. Yea, so oft as we fall into sin, let us consider, that our rising again is no less a work of the great power and mercy of God, than was the raising of Lazarus out of the grave; for otherwise we should have lain still with others, rotting and perishing in our sins. And so have we to praise the Lord, not only for our first and second creation, but for the renewing of that benefit unto us, as oft as we by our transgression have lost that life which the Lord did once communicate unto us.

And this, that our sanctification, or restitution by repentance, after that we have sinned, is called new creation, renders yet unto us a profitable instruction, if we compare our new creation with Adam his first creation. When shall we say that Adam was made a natural man? Never till the Lord breathed the breath of life into him: the Lord first formed his body of clay, after the same shape and similitude, that now you see the body of man in all the proportion of the members thereof. No image can be made by man's wit so lively representing a man, as did that portraiture of clay, which the Lord at the first formed with his own hand, but all this time it lay upon the ground, having eyes that saw not, ears that heard not, a mouth that could not speak, and feet that could not walk: he was then very like unto that which now man is; but (as I said) was not a natural man till God breathed the breath of life into him. Let us consider the like in the new creation: how many shall you find very like unto Christians baptised in the name of Jesus, who have a mouth to speak, and an eye to look up unto heaven, and an ear, as a man would think, to hear

very reverently the word of the Lord: who, when all is done, whatever they seem in the eyes of men, are no other in God's sight but as the carcasses of Christians; so to speak, destitute of that quickening Spirit of grace, which only gives life to the actions of men? Let us take heed to ourselves that we be not of that number; for then only have we this comfort, that we are Christians indeed, when we find that quickening Spirit of grace, which is in Christ Jesus, communicating life unto our spirits, that what we do in the works of Christianity stand not in external show, but may proceed from inward sense and feeling.

BP. COWPER.

The Common and Fatal Error in Man's Repentance.

THERE are men who direct their humiliations and penitential cleansings only to some great actual sin, that has broke out in their lives, and in the mean time never to the power and root of sin, which is the cause of all these actual rebellions. These indeed are most conspicuous in our lives, but the other is the most dangerous and hurtful to our souls. For this is that spring-head that lies under ground, and sends forth all those streams of impurity that flow in all our actions. Now that should most humble us that most provokes God; but it is the sinful frame of the heart, the inclination and disposition of the whole man to wickedness, that renders us so loathsome in the pure eyes of God. We indeed take more notice of a sinful action than of a sinful heart, because that does more vex and disquiet us, and is more visible to ourselves and others. But when repentance is sincere and effectual, where it resolves to kill sin, it gives the first stab to the heart. Thus David, an excellent pattern of true penitence, when he would humble himself for those actual sins of murder and adultery, he pursues them to their first cause, which was his sinful nature. They indeed made a greater noise and clamour in the world, and procured him more trouble and shame from men; but he knew that the power of sin in his heart was most odious, and, consequently, most deserved his sorrow. From whence we may take an excellent and infallible note of difference between a forced insincere, and a true spiritual repentance; that the first humbles us chiefly for the sin of our hearts and natures, and that because

it is the most sinful. *For that it is so, is clear from this consideration; because the sin of our natures makes our actual state and condition sinful, which a bare actual transgression does not. No wonder, therefore, if many poor deluded persons, who spend much time and labour to purify themselves, yet, after all, are not purified. For they fasten their repentance on some one actual sin, but overlook the power. But this certainly is to take the wrong way, and to labour in the fire. Whosoever, therefore, would be thoroughly purified, must begin the work here; strike at the foundation, stop the fountain, block up that place from whence sin receives its supplies; otherwise all labour, all sorrow and humiliation will avail nothing. For after it has beat back sin from one place, it will break out in another. When one actual sin disappears in a man's life, another will presently start forth. The only sure and infallible way of destroying the effect is first to remove the cause.

Another ineffectual course to purify the heart from sin is, when men rest only in complaints of the evil of their natures, without a vigorous endeavour to amend the particular enormities and misdemeanour of their actions. This course is directly contrary to the former, which pursues the reformation of particular actions, without regarding the purification of the heart. Both ways are equally unsuccessful. For to purge the actions before the heart is preposterous; and to complain of the heart without reforming the actions, is vain and superfluous. Many complain and cry out very tragically of the wretchedness of their hearts, their total indisposition to all good, and exceeding propensity to all sin. All which may be very true. But while they are complaining of their hearts, perhaps they freely allow themselves in some known course of disobedience; they frequently renew wounds upon their consciences by the repeated commission of actual sin; and this surely is not the way ever to get themselves purified; thus to complain of sin, and to commit sin; to ensure their complaints by their practices; to cry out of the body of sin, and yet to take no notice of actual impieties; this is a provocation of God, and abuse to themselves. Their business is to turn complaints into endeavours, words into actions, and vigorously oppose every particular temptation; to stifle every sinful

suggestion. For certainly none ever truly hated the sinfulness of his heart who did not in some measure reform the sinfulness of his actions. DR. SOUTH.

There is no true Repentance without Christ and Faith in Him.

BECAUSE we have of our own selves nothing to present us to God, and do no less flee from him after our fall, than our first parent Adam did—who, when he had sinned, did seek to hide himself from the sight of God—we have need of a Mediator for to bring and reconcile us unto him, who for our sins is angry with us. The same is Jesus Christ; who being true and natural God, equal and of one substance with the Father, did, at the time appointed, take upon him our frail nature, in the blessed Virgin's womb, and that of her undefiled substance, that so he might be a Mediator between God and us, and pacify his wrath. Of him doth the Father himself speak from heaven, saying, *This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Matt. iii. 17. And he himself in his Gospel doth cry out and say, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me*, John xiv. 6; i. 36. For he alone did with the sacrifice of his body and blood make satisfaction unto the justice of God for our sins, 1 Pet. i. 16, 17. The Apostles do testify that *he was exalted for to give repentance and remission of sins unto Israel*, Acts v. 31. Both which things he himself did command to be preached in his name, Luke xxiv. 47; John xv. 27. Therefore they are greatly deceived that preach repentance without Christ, and teach the simple and ignorant that it consisteth only in the works of men. They may indeed speak many things of good works, and of amendment of life and manners: but without Christ they be all vain and unprofitable. They that think they have done much of themselves towards repentance, are so much more the further from God, because they do seek those things in their own works and merits, which ought only to be sought in our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in the merits of his death, and passion, and blood-shedding. . . .

What should avail and profit us to be sorry for our sins, to lament and bewail that we have offended our most bounteous and merciful Father, or to confess and acknowledge our offences and trespasses,

though it be done never so earnestly, unless we do steadfastly believe, and be fully persuaded, that God, for his Son Jesus Christ's sake, will forgive us all our sins, and put them out of remembrance, and from his sight?

Therefore, they that teach repentance without a lively faith in our Saviour Jesus Christ, do teach none other but Judas's repentance; as all the schoolmen do, which do only allow these three parts of repentance—the contrition of the heart, the confession of the mouth, and the satisfaction of the work. But all these things we find in Judas's repentance, which in outward appearance did far exceed and pass the repentance of Peter, Matt. xxvii. 3. For, first and foremost, we read in the Gospel, that Judas was so sorrowful and heavy, yea, that he was filled with such anguish and vexation of mind, for that which he had done, that he could not abide to live any longer. Did not he also, before he hanged himself, make an open confession of his fault, when he said, *I have sinned, betraying the innocent blood?* And verily this was a very bold confession, which might have brought him to great trouble. For by it he did lay to the high priest's and elders' charge the shedding of innocent blood, and that they were most abominable murderers. He did also make a certain kind of satisfaction, when he did cast their money unto them again.

No such thing do we read of Peter; although he had committed a very heinous sin, and most grievous offence, in denying of his Master. We find that *he went out, and wept bitterly*; whereof Ambrose speaketh on this manner: 'Peter was sorry and wept, because he erred as a man. I do not find what he said: I know that he wept. I read of his tears, but not of his satisfaction. But how chance that the one was received into favour again with God, and the other cast away, but because that the one did, by a lively faith in him whom he had denied, take hold of the mercy of God; and the other wanted faith, whereby he did despair of the goodness and mercy of God?'

It is evident and plain then, that, although we be never so earnestly sorry for our sins, acknowledge and confess them; yet all these things shall be but means to bring us to utter desperation, except we do steadfastly believe that God our heavenly Father will, for his Son Jesus Christ's

sake, pardon and forgive us our offences and trespasses, and utterly put them out of remembrance in his sight. Therefore, as we said before, they that teach repentance without Christ, and a lively faith in the mercy of God, do only teach Cain's or Judas's repentance.

HOMILY ON REPENTANCE.

No duty or work within the power and performance of man, as such, is able to expiate and take away the guilt of sin. In this matter we must put our hands upon our mouths and be silent for ever. He that thinks and attempts by his own goodness to satisfy God's justice, does by this the more incense it; and by endeavouring to remove his guilt, does indeed increase it. His works of satisfaction for sin are the greatest sins, and stand most in need of the satisfaction of Christ. We know how miserably deluded the papists are in this point, how they wander in the maze of their own inventions about works of penance, deeds of charity, pilgrimages, and many other such vain ways found out by them to purge and purify guilty consciences. A man, perhaps, has committed some gross sin, the guilt of which lies hard and heavy upon his conscience, and how shall he remove it? Why, peradventure, by a blind devotion, he says over so many prayers, goes so many miles barefoot, gives so much to holy uses, and now he is 'rectus in curiâ,' free and absolved in the court of heaven. But certainly the folly of those that practise these things is to be pitied; and the blasphemy of those that teach them to be detested. For do they know and consider what sin is, and whom it strikes at? Is it not the breach of the law? Is it not against the infinite justice and sovereignty of the great God? and can the poor imperfect finite services of a sinful creature ever make up such a breach? Can our pitiful broken mite discharge the debt of ten thousand talents? Those that can imagine the removal of the least sin feasible, by the choicest and most religious of their own works, never as yet knew God truly, nor themselves, nor their sins; they never understood the fiery strictness of the law, nor the spirituality of the Gospel. Now, though this error is most gross and notorious among papists, yet there is something of the same spirit, that leavens and infects the duties of most professors, who in all their works of repent-

ANTH.

ance, sorrow, and humiliation for sin, are too apt secretly to think in their hearts that they make God some amends for their sins. And the reason of this is, because it is natural to all men to be self-justiciaries, and to place a justifying power in themselves, and to conceive a more than ordinary value and excellency in their own works, but especially such works as are religious. But this conception is of all others the most dangerous to the soul, and dishonourable to God, as being absolutely and diametrically opposite to the tenor of the Gospel, and that which evacuates the death and satisfaction of Christ: for it causes us, while we acknowledge a Christ, tacitly to deny the Saviour. And herein is the art and policy of the devil seen, who will keep back the sinner as long as he can from the duties of repentance and humiliation; and when he can do this no longer, he will endeavour to make him trust and confide in them. And so he circumvents us by this dilemma. He will either make us neglect our repentance or adore it; throw away our salvation by omission of duty, or place it in our duties: but let this persuasion still remain fixed upon our spirits, that repentance was enjoined the sinner as a duty, not as a recompense; and that the most that we can do for God cannot countervail the least that we have done against him.

That course which alone is able to purify us from the guilt of sin, is by applying the virtue of the blood of Christ to the soul by renewed acts of faith. We hold indeed that justification, as it is the act of God, is perfect and entire at once, and justifies the soul from all sins both past and future. Yet justification and pardoning mercy is not actually dealt forth to us after particular sins, till we repair to the death and blood of Christ by particular actings and faith upon it; which actings also of themselves cleanse not away the guilt of sin, but the virtue of Christ's blood conveyed by them to the soul: for it is that alone that is able to wash away this deep stain, and to change the hue of the spiritual Ethiopian. Nothing can cleanse the soul but that blood that redeemed the soul.

The invalidity of whatsoever we can do in order to this thing, is sufficiently demonstrated in many places of Scripture. *If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shall*

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thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me, Job ix. 30, 31. He that has nothing to rinse his polluted soul with but his own penitential tears, endeavours only to purify himself in muddy water, which does not purge, but increase the stain. In Christ alone is that fountain which is opened for sin and for uncleanness; and in this only we must wash and bathe our defiled souls, if ever we would have them pure. In 1 John i. 7, *The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin*. It is from his crucified side that there must issue both blood to expiate, and water to cleanse our impurities. Faith also is said to purify the heart, Acts xv. 9; but how? why, certainly as it is instrumental to bring into the soul that purifying virtue that is in Christ. Faith purifies, not as the water itself, but as the conduit that conveys the water. Again, in Rev. i. 5, Christ is said to have *washed us from our sins by his own blood*. There is no cleansing without this; so that we may use the words of the Jews, and convert an imprecation into a blessing, and pray that his blood may be upon us and upon our souls: for it is certain that it will be one way upon us, either to purge or to condemn us. DR. SOUTH.

Repentance must be wise in its application. The sinner (Luke vii. 37—50) did not go to the foot of Mount Sinai to seek for absolution under pretence of her own righteousness, and to demand justification as a reward due to her works. She was afraid, as she had reason to be, that the language of that dreadful mountain proceeding from the mouth of Divine Justice would pierce her through. Nor did she endeavour to ward off the blows of justice by covering herself with superstitious practices. She did not say *where-with shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?* Micah vi. 6, 7. She did not even require priests and Levites to offer propitiatory sacrifices for her. She discerned the sophisms of error, and acknowledged the Redeemer of mankind under the veils of infirmity and poverty, that covered him. She knew, that *the blood of bulls and*

of goats could not purify the conscience. She knew that Jesus, sitting at table with the pharisee was the only offering, the only victim of worth sufficient to satisfy the justice of an offended God. She knew that he was *made unto sinners wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*: that his *name* was the only one *among men whereby they might be saved*. It was to Jesus Christ that she had recourse, bedewing with tears the feet of him, who was about to shed his blood for her, and receiving by an anticipated faith the benefit of the death, that he was going to suffer, she renounced dependence on every kind of satisfaction except his.

SAURIN.

So far are we from being able to make the least disposition towards repentance, before we experience the healing power of Jesus Christ, that repentance itself is even a part of the cure. And we should take it for granted, that the first tendency towards repentance and humility proceeds from God, and is the beginning of the work of God in those to whom he imparts salvation. Jesus Christ came to save those who feel their misery; but it is he who giveth this feeling. He came to save those who repent: but it is he who giveth repentance. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*, Acts v. 31. *He is found of them that sought him not*, Isa. lxxv. 1. He called the publicans to repentance, and rejected the pharisees and scribes. He called a thief unto happiness, and suffered an Apostle to fall into despair. Saul was travelling to Damascus to imprison the Christians, and in the way this active leader of the band is called to be an Apostle. P. DUMOULIN.

The Cross of Christ the great motive to Repentance.

THIS mourning for sin will arise from that view of its malignity and hatefulness which the cross of Christ reveals. The genuine sorrow of a penitent flows from the believing sight of a pierced Saviour. It is not so much the law as the Gospel which softens and wins the whole heart. The law convinces of sin, but the cross makes us abhor it. The law teaches us what we ought to have done, but it is

mercy which wounds and affects the soul for the breach of it. The law shows us the sinfulness of sin, but the Gospel discovers its ingratitude and baseness. We learn from the law the threatenings of God against transgression; but we see in a crucified Saviour the actual weight of the punishment we have incurred. The law instructs us in the holiness of God, but the cross exhibits the most awful and severe display of it. The law opens our malady and leaves us under it; the grace of salvation searches the disease still more deeply, and then brings the cure.

Yes, it is the sight of Christ dying for sin which makes us, not only mourn, but *be in bitterness* on account of it. This mingles gall in every sinful pleasure. This breaks and penetrates the heart. This, not only cuts off the buddings of evil, but *lays the axe to the very root of the tree*. This leads the penitent to *abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes*. This turns his very inmost soul against all sin. This covers him with shame and confusion of face. This makes him feel that it is *an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God*. This causes him to *remember and be confounded, and never open his mouth for shame, when God is pacified towards him for all the things which he has done*. These holy compunctions of soul are far less powerful in the first period of a Christian's repentance. All true penitence indeed has something of this character. But it is afterwards, when he has been for some time under the teaching of *the Spirit of grace and supplications*, has again and again meditated on the cross, has looked with intense interest on the Saviour there, has seen the share he had in his sufferings, and yet the pardon and reconciliation which flow from them; it is then that he indeed mourns for him, *and goes out*, like Peter, and *weeps bitterly*.

REV. D. WILSON.

True Repentance is not an act, but a habit.

THE repentance, from which true confession proceeds, is as lasting as our existence; and it is its permanent, its abiding nature, which proves it to be the repentance which God has blessed. That sorrow for sin, which is the effect of heated passions only, will surely die away, and that, which proceeds from remorse of conscience, is seldom lasting; but that contrition, which

is lodged in the soul by the Spirit of God, nothing can destroy; no length of time can efface it, no sense of pardon can weaken it. It is indeed regulated and modified by time, and the blood of Christ, when applied to the conscience, by taking from it its bitter pangs, causes it to assume a new character; but it does not diminish its activity or strength; on the contrary, it increases both, rendering the humiliation of the believer more habitual and his contrition more deep and tender. His penitence grows in the exact degree, in which his faith and consolation abound, and never ceases growing till it is lost in the joys of heaven. And who can say that these joys will destroy it? Who can say that the Christian does not take with him into the presence of God a remembrance of his former guilt, and add to the fervour of his love and the ardour of his praise by confessing it before his throne?

Repentance then is not an act, it is a habit; not a duty to be performed once in a man's life, and then to be thought of no more, it is to be our daily work, our hourly employment. Thus, as history tells us, Peter repented; and thus David mourned. It is thus too that we ourselves shall mourn, if the arrows of the Lord have really stricken us. Through all the scenes of our life, our sins will be ever before us; and when Death is sent to us, he will find us sorrowing still. The scene of our greatest penitence will be the chamber in which we breathe our last. There may be confidence, there may be peace, there may even be triumph in our dying moments, but they will be marked with a sorrow for sin more lively than we have ever before experienced, with a lowliness of spirit inferior only to the humility of angels.

REV. C. BRADLEY.

Danger of delaying Repentance.

ALAS! the folly of sinners, with all their worldly wisdom! Is it not folly, for the sake of a perishing world, to destroy an immortal soul? For a momentary gratification of the senses, to plunge into everlasting fire? For let us be sure, that if there be indeed an eternal difference by the nature of things between righteousness and unrighteousness, God, in that judgment to come, will also make a difference between the righteous and the wicked. If your worldliness will consist with this prospect, well: still let it be a sound,

ever meeting you amidst the din of the world, that there is a judgment to come! *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment,* Eccl. xi. 9. . . .

Oh that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!—that they would consider that they have a latter end! that how many soever the days they give to pleasure, how high soever they climb in power and grandeur, how happy soever they may be in their friends and possessions, there is an end to all, not far distant. When that is come, how comfortless must be the state of the soul that has nothing else to look to! This is one reason why God, in his mercy, calls us away from earth, and would loosen our attachment to all things here, that we may set our affections on things above.

As we may be permitted to hope that some among us tremble at the thought of a future judgment, we entreat them not to stifle their convictions, nor increase their danger by procrastination. Say not to your faithful monitor, your own conscience, *Go thy way for this time: when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee.* Hear, conscience! What more convenient season than the present—when you have been excited, summoned, reasoned with?—Will you put it off to your death-bed? Alas! the soul has enough to do then, to support the weight of a dying body; which, after being so long the abode, the instrument, the companion of the soul, becomes a burden to it which it cannot sustain. Besides, will you give the best of your time to Satan, and leave only the remnant to God? God hath not dealt thus with you, who gave his beloved Son for you. . . .

Trifle not with God: *To-day if ye will hear his voice, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts.* He is free in the dispensations of his grace, and may withhold to-morrow what he grants to-day. Therefore, *whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest,* Eccl. ix. 10. Nay, even in this world procrastination may be an evil not to be remedied: for wisdom thus speaks:—*Because I have called, and ye refused: I have*

stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me, Prov. i. 24—28. Though true penitents find mercy at the eleventh hour, many pray on their death-beds who are never heard; many cry for mercy, and never obtain it.

Now, therefore, while you have life, and health, and strength; while your sun is not yet gone down, nor the grave yawning for you beneath; before Time begin his ravages, and disease sap your vitals—ascend your watch-tower—contemplate the prospect—stretch your thought inward—and determine what the end shall be. You are, in one sense, the arbiters of your own destiny! God has opened the way to himself by the mediation of his Son, and by the offers of his Spirit. Through the Son, you may be forgiven—through the Spirit, sanctified. A feast is spread, to which you are invited; a river of life, of which you may drink; a crown of glory, which is your appointed reward! May God fix your hearts for glory, honour, and immortality, through Jesus Christ our Lord! REV. H. MARTYN.

God does not usually surprise any man at once with his sore judgments; but when all his friendly admonitions are disregarded, and all the respites of his indulgent grace neglected; then his severe threatenings are suddenly discharged on the sinner's guilty head. The disciples had time enough before to rouse themselves out of their lethargy; but as they did not make use of that opportunity, they were suddenly surprised by the enemy, and they had scarce time to recollect themselves. Hardly had our blessed Saviour given them his last exhortation, when, behold, the multitude of the enemies were coming in full march upon them. Thus it was with the human race before the deluge. They had first a respite of a hundred and twenty years; to this was added the time while Noah was building and preparing the Ark; and lastly, seven days more while he was storing it with necessaries.

But no amendment or reformation ensuing, after the expiration of these three terms, we are informed *that all the fountains of the great deep were broken up*, Gen. vii. 11. Such is the case also in our days. It has been proclaimed that the great judgments of God are at hand; we have also with astonishment observed them executed on particular persons; yet no one lays them to heart. Voluptuousness, sensuality, and wickedness of every kind increase and abound, and the kind warnings and awakening calls of God are entirely disregarded. Now we may ourselves, without difficulty, calculate what will be the issue at last. The Divine chastisements will pour down like a torrent, driven by the Spirit of the Lord: and it is to be feared, that many sinners, who now imprudently delay their repentance, will, one time or other, be taken so unexpectedly as not to have time to recollect themselves; for God has already shewn his judgment on many corrupt trees, which lie as they fall. O that we may better employ our season of grace, and rightly improve the present opportunities!

RAMBACH.

A Death-bed Repentance.

It is true, *God's thoughts are not our thoughts*; and it is possible that the approach of death may make deeper impressions on you, than either sermons or pious books have made; but yet *our God is a consuming fire*. What a time is a dying illness for the receiving of such impressions! I omit those sudden and unexpected deaths, of which we have so many yearly, or rather daily examples. I omit the sudden deaths of those, who, while we were conversing and transacting business with them, were seized with violent pains, turned pale, and died, and were instantly stretched on a bier. I pass those who went to bed healthy and well, who quietly fell asleep, and whom we have found in the morning dead and cold. All these melancholy examples we omit, for one would imagine, considering your conduct, and hearing your conversation, that each of you had received a revelation to assure him of an exemption from sudden death. But what a time is a dying illness for a renovation and conversion! Would not one suppose, that those, who hope to be converted then, have always lived among immortals, and have neither heard of death, nor seen a person die? Ah! what ob-

stacles! what a world of obstacles oppose such extravagant hopes, and justify the efforts of those who endeavour to destroy them! Here is business that must be settled; a will, which must be made; a number of articles that must be discussed: there are friends who must be embraced; relations that must be dissolved; children who must be torn away; the soul must be writhen, and rent, and riven asunder with sighs and adieus. Here arise frightful ideas of death, which have never entered the mind but amidst numberless hurries of necessary business, or countless objects of deceitful pleasures; ideas of a death that hath been always considered at a distance, though so many voices have announced its approach: but the approach of which now astonishes, benumbs, and renders motionless; there the illness increases, pains multiply, agonies convulse; the whole soul, full of intolerable sensations, loses the power of seeing and hearing, thinking and reflecting. Here are medicines more intolerable than the malady, operations more violent than the agonies which they are designed to allay: there conscience, for the first time, enlightened, awaked, and alarmed, rolls in tides of remorse: the terrible remembrance of a life spent in sin; an army of irrefragable witnesses, from all parts arising, prove the guilt, and denounce a sentence of death on the departing soul. See now whether this first reflection, which authoriseth our endeavours to comfort and invigorate your souls, when you have deferred your conversion to your last hour, be inconsistent with those which we use to terrify and alarm you, when you obstinately put off your repentance to that time?

It is true, *God's thoughts are not our thoughts*; and we have neither a sufficient knowledge of other people's hearts, nor of our own, to affirm with certainty when their faculties are entirely contaminated: But yet, *our God is a consuming fire*. We know men, to whom the truth is become unintelligible, in consequence of the disguise in which they have taken the pains to clothe it; and who have accustomed themselves to palliate vice, till they are become incapable of perceiving its turpitude.

God's thoughts are not our thoughts, it is true; and we have seen some examples of people, who have proved, since their recovery, that they were truly converted in

sickness, and on whose account we presume that others may possibly be converted by the same mean: but yet *our God is a consuming fire*. How rare are these examples! Doth this require proof? Must we demonstrate it? You are our proofs: you, yourselves, are our demonstrations. Who of you, (I speak of those who are of mature age)—who of you hath not been sick, and thought himself in danger of death? Who hath not made resolutions in that distressing hour, and promised God to reform? The law of these exercises forbids certain details, and prohibits the naming of my hearers: but I appeal to your consciences, and, if your consciences be asleep, I appeal to the immortal God. How many of you have deposited your resolutions with us, and have solemnly engaged to renounce the world with all its sinful maxims? How many of you have imposed upon us by appearances of conversion, and have imposed upon yourselves too? How many of you should we have alleged as new examples of death-bed conversions, if God had not granted you a recovery? Are you converted indeed? Have you renounced the world and its maxims? Ah! were we to judge, by the conduct of those who have recovered, of the state of those who are dead! . . . My brethren, I dare not examine the matter, but I leave it to your meditation.

It is true, *God's thoughts are not our thoughts*; and God worketh miracles in religion as well as in nature: but yet, *our God is a consuming fire*. Who can assure himself that, having abused common grace, he shall obtain extraordinary assistances?

It is true, *God's thoughts are not our thoughts*; and there is nothing in the Holy Scriptures, which empowers us to shut the gates of heaven against a dying penitent: we have no authority to tell you, that there is no more hope for you, but that you are lost without remedy: but yet, *our God is a consuming fire*. There are hundreds of passages in our Bibles, which authorise us—what am I saying? there are hundreds of passages that command us, under the penalty of suffering all the punishments that belong to the crime, not to conceal any thing from the criminal: there are hundreds of passages which empower and enjoin us to warn you—you, who are fifty years of age; you, who are sixty; you, who are fourscore; that still to put off the work

of your conversion is a madness, an excess of inflexibility and indolence, which all the flames of hell can never expiate.

SAURIN.

Therefore consider, all ye who still make it your sole employment to fulfil the lusts of your flesh; all ye who make earthly things, as wealth, honour, ease, and voluptuousness, your supreme felicity, and act as if you had a continuing city here, and were to live in it for ever; consider that you are heaping up matter for a miserable death: and if you proceed in this beaten track, your last moments, unless the grace of God should interpose to awaken your sleeping consciences, will be attended with terrible disquietude, and inexpressible agonies of mind. Alas! how wretched will be your condition when, lifting up your eyes, you see nothing before you but horror, misery, and torture! If you look back to your former life, there all is sin, guilt, and impiety; if you look forward, behold an eternity of agonising torments and despair! Above you stands an incensed Judge; under you the abyss of hell is opened; and even within you, you will hear the clamours, and sensibly feel the stings of conscience, the silent witness and accuser of your most secret sins and evil thoughts. Do not flatter yourselves with a vain hope, or think that all may be set to rights with a few broken sighs; think not that only crying out, God be merciful to me a sinner! is a sufficient atonement for a life of impiety. Alas! repentance is too arduous, too important a work, to be thus huddled over. When the body is struggling with the pains of the distemper, and the conscience is at the same time terrified with the wrath of God, and the horrors of death, what strength can be left for such a conflict? Therefore, while you are in the days of your health, and are not deprived of an ability of sinning; in the name of Jesus Christ renounce the service of sin, and give yourselves to him who has shed his precious blood on the cross, and acquired for you a right to a blessed eternity. Settle your account with Heaven in time, that all remaining to be done on your death-bed may be, to die tranquil and serene.

As for you who have received the grace of God, be not remiss in your conflict against sin; be not negligent in perfecting

your sanctification in the fear of God. Think not that you may finish the remainder of your work on your sick-bed, and there make up any deficiency in your account, before it is finally closed. Do ye then know how many hours you will have for your preparation on your death-bed? Are ye assured that your distemper will be of such a nature, as to leave you in full possession of your understanding till the last moment? Habituate yourselves in due time to the performance of those duties, on which your mind will be employed in your last hours; so that, if the Lord be pleased to grant you time, your last hour may be an hour of triumph; and that if, on the other hand, you should be suddenly surprised by death, yet your souls shall suffer no detriment, but pass calmly into life. . . .

Look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith, and obey his divine precepts in the time of your life; and this will be the most effectual means not only for dying happily, but joyfully; so that in the hour appointed for your last in the counsel of your heavenly Father, you may say with joy, *It is finished! Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!* RAMBACH.

The Pleasure of Repentance.

It is true, that to be religious, is to live a life of repentance, and yet religious ways are pleasant, notwithstanding. It is true, that we must mourn for sin daily, and reflect with regret upon our manifold infirmities; sin must be bitter to us, and we must even loathe and abhor ourselves for the corruptions which dwell in us, and the many actual transgressions which are committed by us. We must renew our repentance daily, and every night must make some sorrowful reflections upon the transgressions of the day. But then it is not walking in the way of wisdom that creates us this sorrow, but our trifling in that way, and our turning aside out of it. If we would keep close to these ways, and pass forward in them as we ought, there would be no occasion for repentance. If we were as we should be, we should be always praising God, and rejoicing in him; but we make other work for ourselves by our own folly, and then complain that religion is unpleasant;—and whose fault is that? If we would be always loving and delighting in God, and would live a life of communion with him, we should have no oc-

casione to repent of that; but if we leave *the fountain of living waters*, and turn aside to *broken cisterns*, or the *brooks in summer*, and see cause to repent of it, we may thank ourselves. What there is of bitterness in repentance, is owing not to our religion, but to our defects and defaults in religion; and it proves that there is bitterness, not in the ways of God, but in the ways of sin, which make a penitential sorrow necessary, for the preventing of a sorrow a thousand times worse; for sooner or later sin will have sorrow. If repentance be bitter, we must not say this is occasioned through being godly, but through being sinful. *This is thy wickedness, because it is bitter.* If by sin we have made sorrow necessary, it is certainly better to mourn now, than *to mourn at the last.* To continue impenitent, is not to *put away sorrow from thy heart*, but to put it off to a worse place.

Even in repentance, if it be right, there is a true pleasure, a pleasure accompanying it. Our Saviour has said of them who thus *mourn*, not only that *they shall be comforted*, but that they *are blessed*. When a man is conscious to himself that he has done an ill thing, and what is unbecoming him, and may be hurtful to him, it is incident to him to repent of it. Now religion has found a way to put a sweetness into that bitterness. Repentance, when it is not from the influence of religion, is nothing but bitterness and horror, as Judas's was; but repentance, as it is made an act of religion, as it is one of the laws of Christ, is pleasant, because it is the raising of the spirit, and the discharging of that which is noxious and offensive. Our religion has not only taken care that penitents be not overwhelmed with an excess of sorrow, and swallowed up by it, that their sorrow do not *work death*, as the *sorrow of the world does*; but it has provided that even this bitter cup should be sweetened; and therefore we find that under the law, the sacrifices for sin were commonly attended with expressions of joy: and while the priests were sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices to make atonement, the Levites attended with psalteries and harps, for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets. Even the day to afflict the soul is the day of atonement; and when we *receive the atonement*, we *joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. In giving our consent to the

atonement, we take the comfort of the atonement. The same word, in Hebrew, signifies both to comfort and to repent, because there is comfort in true repentance.

Much more after repentance, there is a pleasure flowing from it. It is a way of pleasantness, for it is the way to pleasantness. To them that mourn in Zion, that sorrow after a godly sort, God has appointed *beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning*. And the more the soul is humbled under the sense of sin, the more sensible will the comfort of pardon be; it is wounded in order to be healed. The jubilee trumpet sounded in the close of the day of soul-affliction, which proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of release.

MATT. HENRY.

Heart-felt sorrow for sin is not opposed to happiness. The example of St. Peter shows us, on the contrary, that it is the appointed means of leading the wandering sufferer back to the source of all consolation. The tears of penitence are not tears of unmingled bitterness. There is a

joy connected with them, which is as satisfying and exalting, as it is purifying and humbling. God himself has pronounced the sorrow of the poor in spirit blessed, and he has not blessed it in vain. His people taste its sweetness. Their happiest hours are those, which are spent in the exercise of penitence and faith, and while these graces are in lively exercise, they envy not the inhabitants of heaven. . . .

We have no reason therefore to mourn over those of our friends, whom the Lord has taught to weep over their manifold sins. Their spiritual sorrow sends up, as it were, a new ray of joy into the kingdom of the blessed; and if we were holy and wise like the angels, we too should rejoice over the sinner that repenteth, and his complaining and sighs would be as music in our ears. And yet it is painful to think how many of us would rather see our children and friends trifling in the most humiliating scenes of folly and sin, than see them retiring from the crowd, as the stricken deer retires from the herd, to confess their iniquities, and to mourn and to bleed alone. REV. C. BRADLEY.

SECTION IX.—WHEREIN TRUE KNOWLEDGE CONSISTS.

All Learning and Wisdom out of Christ is vain and unprofitable.

THE great depth of the word of God keeps the real Christian ever a learner. He knows that it is impossible to reach the utmost of God's wisdom. There will be always mysteries to be unfolded, because man's comprehension is finite; at the bound of which, how wide soever it may extend, remaineth ignorance. One, who had been in the third heaven and in spirit caught up into paradise itself, where he heard unspeakable words, could only say when he treated of the divine counsels, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* He could stand upon the shore and taste; but all beyond was an infinite ocean.

The true disciple, however, knows enough to make him see the vanity and unprofitableness of all learning and wis-

dom (if so they may be called) out of Christ. The speculations of men are but dreams, and their pursuits but idle labours at the best, which begin and end in self, or which have no higher object than this evil world. The poor simple countryman who hath learned Christ (and many such, blessed be God, there are) can pity the pompous ignorance of those, who know almost every thing but God and the proper value of their own souls. By a logic far beyond that of the schools, he hath been led to this conclusion, that God is his Father, that Christ is his Saviour, that the Holy Spirit is his Guide, that the Bible is his charter and his library, that the devil, the world, and the flesh are his foes, that the earth is the wilderness of his banishment, that heaven is his home, and that all the favour, love, and power of the God-head are engaged to bring him hither. The worldly wise can only value this (if at all) when carnal knowledge is dying with their bodies, and all their trifling thoughts

are about to perish. Hence it is, that the poor man's knowledge being sound and true, though ever so small, can stand the onset of trials in the world, and death at last; while the self-taught, the learned, and the knowing, having none of this true understanding, fall into the absurdest errors, fail in their course, and frequently go off at last doubting and despairing.

O, my soul, seek thou the substantial wisdom which cometh from God, and which neither time, nor eternity itself, can diminish, but only brighten and improve. Though other knowledge may be valuable for the purposes of this world, yet this alone can ripen for heaven, and is therefore most earnestly to be sought for by thee, whose business and calling, whose citizenship and hope, are principally there.

AMB. SERLE.

But God who created man for the enjoyment of himself, hath happily accomplished his eternal decree, by the work of our redemption, wherein his own glory is most visible. And the Gospel which reveals this to us, humbles whom it justifies, and comforts those that were condemned; it abases more than the law, but without despair; and advances more than nature could, but without presumption. The Mediator takes away the guilt of our old sins, and our inclination to new sins. We are not only restored, but exalted, made *heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 17. For these reasons the Apostle sets so high a value upon the heavenly doctrine that reveals a Saviour to the undone world. He desires to *know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 2. He despiseth all pharisaical and philosophical learning *in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus*, Phil. iii. 8. Other knowledge swells the mind, and increases the esteem of ourselves; this gives us a sincere view of our state. It discovers our misery in its causes, and the almighty mercy that saves us. Other knowledge enlightens the understanding without changing the heart, but this inspires us with the love of God, with hatred of sin, and makes us truly better. In seeking after other knowledge, the mind is perplexed by endless inquiries; here it is at rest, as the wavering needle is fixed when turned towards the north. Ignorance of other things may be without any real damage to us, for we may

be directed by the skilful how to preserve life and estate; but this knowledge is absolutely necessary to justify, sanctify, and save us. All other knowledge is useless at the hour of death; then the richest stock of learning is lost, the vessel being split wherein the treasure was laid; but this pearl of inestimable price is both the ornament of our prosperity, and the support of our adversity. A little ray of this is infinitely more desirable, than the light of all human sciences in their lustre and perfection.

And what an amazing folly is it, that men who are possessed with an earnest passion of knowing, should waste their time and strength in searching after things, the knowledge of which cannot remove the evils that oppress them, and be careless of the saving knowledge of the Gospel! Were there no other reason to diminish the esteem of earthly knowledge, but the difficulty of its acquisition, that error often surprises those who are searching after truth, this might check our intemperate pursuit of it. Sin hath not only shortened our understandings, but our lives, so that we cannot arrive to the perfect discovery of inferior objects. But suppose that one, by his vast mind, should comprehend all created things, from the centre of the earth to the circumference of the heavens, and were not savingly enlightened in the mystery of our redemption, with all his knowledge he would be a prey to Satan, and increase the triumphs of hell. The historian Pliny upbraids the Roman luxury, that with so much cost and hazard they should send to foreign parts for trees that were beautiful but barren, and produced a shadow only without fruit. With greater reason we may wonder, that men should, with the expense of their precious hours, purchase barren curiosities, which are unprofitable to their last end. How can a condemned criminal, who is in suspense between life and death, attend to study the secrets of nature and art, when all his thoughts are taken up how to prevent the execution of the sentence? And it is no less than a prodigy of madness, that men who have but a short and uncertain space allowed them to escape the wrath to come, should rack their brains in studying things impertinent to salvation, and neglect the knowledge of a Redeemer: especially when there is so clear a revelation of him. The righteousness of faith doth not command us to ascend to the heavens,

or descend into the deep to make a discovery of it; but the word is nigh us, that discovers the certain way to a happy immortality, Rom. x. 6, 7. Seneca, a philosopher and a courtier, valued his being in the world only upon this account, that he might contemplate the starry heaven. He saw only the visible beauty of the firmament, but was ignorant of the glory within it, and of the way that leads to it; yet, to our shame, he speaks that the sight of it made him despise the earth, and without the contemplation of the celestial bodies, he esteemed his continuance in the world not the life of a man, but the toil of a beast. 'Quid erat cur in numero viventium me positum esse gauderem? an ut cibos et potum percolarem? ut hoc corpus casurum, ac fluidum, periturumque nisi subinde impleatur, farcirem? et viverem ægri minister? ut morti timerem cui omnes nascimur? Detrahe hoc inæstimabile bonum; non est vita tanti ut sudem, ut æstuem. O quam contempta res est homo nisi supra humana se erexerit!' But what transports had he been in, if he had been acquainted with the contrivance of our redemption, the admirable order of its parts, and the beauty that results from the composition of the whole! But we that with open face may in the glass of the Gospel behold the glory of the Lord, turn away our eyes from it to vanity. Here the complaint is more just: 'Ad sapientium quis accedit? quis dignam judicat, nisi quam in transitu noverit?' We content ourselves with slight and transient glances, but do not seriously and fixedly consider this blessed design of God, upon which the beginning of our happiness in this, and the perfection of it in the next life, is built. Let us provoke ourselves by the example of the angels who are not concerned in this redemption as man is; for they continued in their fidelity to their Creator, and were always happy in his favour; and where there is no alienation between parties, reconciliation is unnecessary; yet they are students with us in the same book, and unite all their powers in the contemplation of this mystery: they are represented stooping to pry into these secrets, to signify their delight in what they know, and their desire to advance in the knowledge of them, 1 Pet. i. 12. With what intention then should we study the Gospel, who are the subject and end of it! DR. BATES.

Christ crucified is the library which tri-

umphant souls will be studying in to all eternity. This is the only library, which is the true *ιαρπειον ψυχης*, that which cures the soul of all its maladies and distempers: other knowledge makes men's minds giddy and flatulent; this settles and composes them: other knowledge is apt to swell men into high conceits and opinions of themselves; this brings them to the truest view of themselves, and thereby to humility and sobriety: other knowledge leaves men's hearts as it found them; this alters them, and makes them better. So transcendent an excellency is there in the *knowledge of Christ crucified* above the sublimest speculations in the world!

BP. STILLINGFLEET.

Test of a True Knowledge of Christ.

WOULD we know whether we know Christ aright, let us consider whether the life of Christ be in us. He that hath not the life of Christ in him, he hath nothing but the name, nothing but a fancy of Christ; he hath not the substance of him. He that builds his house upon this foundation, not an airy notion of Christ swimming in his brain, but Christ really dwelling and living in his heart, as our Saviour himself witnesseth, he buildeth his house upon a rock, and when the floods come, and the winds blow, and the rain descends, and beats upon it, it shall stand impreguably. But he that builds all his comfort in an ungrounded persuasion that God from all eternity hath loved him, and absolutely decreed him to life and happiness, and seeketh not for God really dwelling in his soul; he builds his house upon a quicksand, and it shall suddenly sink and be swallowed up: *His hope shall be cut off, and his trust shall be a spider's web; he shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.*

We are nowhere commanded to pry into these secrets, but the wholesome counsel and advice given us is this, to *make our calling and election sure*. We have no warrant in Scripture to peep into these hidden rolls and volumes of eternity, and to make it our first thing that we do when we come to Christ, to spell out our names in the stars, and to persuade ourselves that we are certainly elected to everlasting happiness, before we see the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, shaped in our hearts. God's everlasting decree is too dazzling and bright an object

for us at first to set our eye upon. It is far easier and safer for us to look upon the rays of his goodness and holiness as they are reflected in our hearts, and there to read the mild and gentle characters of God's love to us, in our love to him, and our hearty compliance with his heavenly will: as it is safer for us, if we would see the sun, to look upon it here below in a pail of water, than to cast up our daring eyes upon the body of the sun itself, which is too radiant and scorching for us. The best assurance that any one can have of his interest in God, is doubtless the conformity of his soul to him. Those divine purposes, whatsoever they be, are altogether unsearchable and unknowable by us; they lie wrapt up in everlasting darkness, and covered in a deep abyss: Who is able to fathom the bottom of them?

Let us ~~not~~ therefore make this our first attempt towards God and religion, to persuade ourselves strongly of these everlasting decrees: for if at our first flight we aim so high, we shall haply but scorch our wings, and be struck back with lightning, as those giants of old were that would needs attempt to assault Heaven. And it is indeed a most gigantical essay, to thrust ourselves so boldly into the lap of Heaven; it is the prank of a Nimrod, of a mighty hunter, thus rudely to deal with God, and to force Heaven and happiness before his face, whether he will or no. The way to obtain a good assurance indeed of our title to heaven is, not to clamber up to it by a ladder of our own ungrounded persuasions, but to dig as low as hell by humility and self-denial in our own hearts: and though this may seem to be the farthest way about, yet it is indeed the nearest and safest way to it. We must *ἀναβαίνειν κάτω*, and *καταβαίνειν ἄνω*, as the Greek epigram speaks, ascend downward, and descend upward, if we would indeed come to heaven, or get any true persuasion of our title to it.

The most gallant and triumphant confidence of a Christian riseth safely and surely on this low foundation, that lies deeper under ground, and there stands firmly and steadfastly. When our heart is once tuned into a conformity with the word of God, when we feel our will perfectly to concur with his will, we shall then presently perceive a *spirit of adoption* within ourselves, teaching us to cry *Abba, Father*. We shall not then care for peeping into

those hidden records of eternity, to see whether our names be written there in golden characters: no, we shall find a copy of God's thoughts concerning us written in our own breasts. There we may read the characters of his favour to us; there we may feel an inward sense of his love to us, flowing out of our hearty and unfeigned love to him. And we shall be more undoubtedly persuaded of it, than if any of those winged watchmen above, that are privy to Heaven's secrets, should come and tell us that they saw our names enrolled in those volumes of eternity. Whereas, on the contrary, though we strive to persuade ourselves never so confidently, that God from all eternity hath loved us, and elected us to life and happiness; if we do yet in the mean time entertain any iniquity within our hearts, and willingly close with any lust: do what we can, we shall find many a cold qualm ever now and then seizing upon us at approaching dangers; and when death itself shall grimly look us in the face, we shall feel our hearts even to die within us, and our spirits quite faint away, though we strive to raise them and recover them never so much with the strong waters and aquavitæ of our own ungrounded presumptions. The least inward lust willingly continued in will be like a worm, fretting the gourd of our jolly confidence and presumptuous persuasion of God's love, and always gnawing at the root of it; and though we strive to keep it alive, and continually besprinkle it with some dews of our own, yet it will be always dying and withering in our bosoms. But a good conscience within will be always better to a Christian than *health to his navel, and marrow to his bones*; it will be an everlasting cordial to his heart; it will be softer to him than a bed of down, and he may sleep securely upon it in the midst of raging and tempestuous seas, when the winds bluster, and the waves beat round about him. A good conscience is the best looking-glass of heaven; in which the soul may see God's thoughts and purposes concerning it, as so many shining stars reflected to it. *Hereby we know Christ, hereby we know that Christ loves us, if we keep his commandments.* CUDWORTH.

The end of Literature is to remove part of that Curse derived from the Fall.

THE particular end of literature (though not observed by many, men's eyes being

fixed on false ends, which compels them in their progress *aberrare a scopo*) is none other, but to remove some part of that curse which is come upon us by sin. Learning is the product of the soul's struggling with the curse for sin. Adam, at his first creation, was completely furnished with all that knowledge (excepting only things not then in being, neither in themselves, nor any natural causes, as that which we now call tongues, and those things that are the subject of story) as far as it lies in a needful tendency to the utmost end of man, which we now press after. There was no straitness, much less darkness upon his understanding, that should make him sweat for a way to improve, and make out those general conceptions of things which he had. For his knowledge of nature, it is manifest from his imposition of suitable names to all the creatures, (the particular reasons of the most of which to us are lost,) wherein, from the approbation given of his nomination of things in the Scripture, and the significancy of what yet remains evident; it is most apparent it was done upon a clear acquaintance with their natures. Hence Plato could observe that he was most wise that first imposed names on things, yea, had more than human wisdom. Were the wisest men living, yea, a general collection of all the wise men in the world, to make an experiment of their skill and learning, in giving names to all living creatures suitable to their natures, and expressive of their qualities, they would quickly perceive the loss they have incurred. Adam was made perfect, for the whole end of ruling the creatures, and living to God for which he was made; which, without the knowledge of the nature of the one, and the will of the other, he could not be. All this being lost by sin, a multiplication of tongues also being brought in as a curse for and after rebellion (Gen. xi. 3, &c.); the whole design of learning is but to disentangle the soul from this issue of sin. Ignorance, darkness, and blindness, is come upon the understanding; acquaintance with the works of God, spiritual and natural, is lost; strangeness of communication is given by multiplication of tongues. Tumultuating of passions and affections, with innumerable darkening prejudices, are also come upon us. To remove and take this away, to disentangle the mind in its reasonings,

to recover an acquaintance with the works of God, to subduct the soul from under the effects of the curse of division of tongues, is the aim and tendency of literature.

DR. OWEN.

Advantages of early Education, and what it ought to be.

RELIGIOUS education should be begun in the dawn of childhood. The earliest days, after intelligence is fairly formed in the mind, are incomparably the best for this purpose. The child should be taught, as soon as he is capable of understanding the instructions which are to be communicated. Nothing should be suffered to pre-occupy the place which is destined to truth. If the intellect is not filled with sound instruction as fast as it is capable of receiving it, the enemy, who never neglects to *sow tares*, when parents are *asleep*, will imperceptibly fill it with a dangerous and noxious growth. The great and plain doctrines of religion should be taught so early, that the mind should never remember when it began to learn, or when it was without this knowledge. Whenever it turns a retrospective view upon the preceding periods of its existence, these truths should seem always to have been in its possession, to have the character of innate principles, to have been inwoven in its nature, and to constitute a part of all its current of thinking.

In this manner the best security which is in the power of man will be furnished against the introduction and admission of dangerous errors. The principles of infidelity have little support in argument or evidence; but they easily take deep root in the inclinations of the mind, and hold but too frequently a secure possession of its faith by the aid of passion and prejudice. No human method of preventing this evil is so effectual as engrossing the assent to evangelical truth, when the mind is absolutely clear from every prepossession. A faith thus established, all the power of sophistry will be unable to shake. In the same manner ought its religious impressions to be begun. No period should be within the future reach of the memory, when they had not begun. Every child easily imbibes at this period a strong and solemn reverence for his Creator; easily realises his universal presence, and the inspection of his all-seeing eye; admits without difficulty, and without reluctance,

that he is an awful and unchangeable enemy of sin; and feels, that he himself is accountable to this great Being for all his conduct. The conscience also is at this period exceedingly tender and susceptible; readily alarmed by the apprehension of guilt, and prepared to contend, or to fly, at the approach of a known temptation. All the affections also are easily moved, and fitted to retain permanently, and often indelibly, whatever impressions are made. The heart is soft, gentle, and easily won; strongly attached by kindness, peculiarly to the parents themselves, and generally to all others with whom it is connected. To every amiable, every good thing it is drawn comparatively without trouble or resistance; and united by bands, which no future art or force can dissolve. Against every odious and bad thing its opposition is with equal ease excited, and rendered permanent. Its sensibility to praise for laudable actions is exquisite; and no less exquisite its dread of blame for conduct which is unworthy. Its hope also of future enjoyment, and its fear of future suffering are awakened in a moment, without labour, by obvious considerations, and with a strength which renders them powerful springs of action.

This susceptibility, this tenderness of heart and of conscience, constitute a most interesting, desirable, and useful preparation of the mind to receive evangelical truths, and religious impressions, and invest it with all the beauty and fertility of spring. Almost every thing which the eye discerns is then fair, delightful, and promising. Let no person to whom God has committed the useful, honourable, and happy employment of cultivating minds, be idle at this auspicious season. On faithful, wise, and well directed labours busily employed at this period of the human year, the mildest winds of heaven breathe, its most fertilising showers descend, and its softest and most propitious sunshine sheds its happy influence. He who loses this golden season will, when the autumn arrives, find nothing in his fields but barrenness and death.

Nor is this period less happily fitted for the establishment of useful moral habits. Habits, as has been heretofore observed, are the result of custom or repetition, and may in this manner be formed at any age. But in early childhood the

susceptibility is so great, and the feeling so tender, that a few repetitions will generate habitual feeling. Every impression at this period is deep. When these therefore are made through a moderate succession, the combined effect can rarely be effaced. Thus good habits are soon, and durably established, and all that course of trouble prevented, of which parents so justly and bitterly complain, when this work is to be done at future seasons of life.

But habits constitute the man. Good habits form a good man, and evil habits an evil man. Subtract these from the character, and it will be difficult to conceive what will be left. It is plain, therefore, that habits are of supreme importance to the well-being of the child, his character, his all. Of course, the establishment of those which are good is the first object of parental duty. . . .

In a religious education the Scriptures only should be taught. The youngest mind which can perceive moral truth at all, clearly discerns that no doctrines can be invested with an importance, comparable to that of the doctrines taught by God. The character of this great and awful Being is seen by the humblest intelligent creature to be immeasurably distant from every other. This distinction, of supreme consequence in itself, should be preserved in its full force by the parent throughout all his instructions. Religious truth, that is, whatever is an obligatory object of faith, or rule of duty, whatever 'pertains to life and to godliness,' is wholly and only taught by God. This great doctrine should be originally impressed on the early mind; and should afterwards be never suffered to escape from its attention. Scriptural truths should, for this reason, be clearly distinguished at every period as the unquestioned word of God, and come to the child with the sanction of divine authority. In this method the child will imbibe a reverence for these truths, entirely peculiar; and, if no human opinions be mingled with them in the instruction, will carry it through life. A little mixture of philosophy, however, will in a great measure prevent this desirable effect; and imperceptibly lower the Scriptures from their supreme dignity, and inestimable importance, down to the humble level of mere human opinion.

DR. DWIGHT.

SECTION X.—ON PRAYER.

The nature of Prayer.

PRAYER is not a smooth expression, or a well-contrived form of words; not the product of a ready memory, or of a rich invention exerting itself in the performance. These may draw a neat picture of it, but still the life is wanting. The motion of the heart God-wards, holy and divine affection, makes prayer real, and lively, and acceptable to the living God, to whom it is presented; the pouring out of thy heart to him who made it, and therefore hears it, and understands what it speaks, and how it is moved and affected in calling on him. It is not the gilded paper and good writing of a petition, that prevails with a king, but the moving sense of it. And to that King who discerns the heart, heart-sense is the sense of all, and that which only he regards: he listens to hear what that speaks, and takes all as nothing where that is silent. All other excellence in prayer is but the outside and fashion of it; this is the life of it.

Though prayer, precisely taken, is only petition, yet, in its fuller and usual sense, it comprehends the venting of our humble sense of vileness and sin, in sincere confession, and the extolling and praising of the holy name of our God, his excellency and goodness, with thankful acknowledgment of received mercies. Of these sweet ingredient perfumes is the incense of prayer composed, and by the Divine fire of love it ascends unto God, the heart and all with it; and when the hearts of the saints unite in joint prayer, the pillar of sweet smoke goes up the greater and the fuller. Thus says that song of the Spouse—*Going up from the wilderness, as pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and all the powders of the merchant*, Cant. iii. 6. The word there, (*timeroth* from *temer*, a palm-tree,) signifies straight pillars, like the tallest, straightest kind of trees. And, indeed, the sincerity and unfeignedness of prayer, makes it go up as a straight pillar, no crookedness in it, tending straight towards heaven, and bowing to no side by the way. Oh! the single and fixed viewing of God,

as it, in other ways, is the thing which makes all holy and sweet, so particularly does it in this divine work of prayer.

LEIGHTON.

Prayer is not an exertion of the mind, an arrangement of ideas, a profound knowledge of the mysteries and counsels of God; it is a simple emotion of the heart; it is a lamentation of the soul, deeply affected at the sight of its own wretchedness; it is a keen and inward feeling of our wants and of our weakness, and a humble confidence which it lays before its Lord, in order to obtain relief and deliverance from them. Prayer supposes, in the soul which prays, neither great lights, uncommon knowledge, nor a mind more cultivated and exalted than that of the rest of men; it supposes only more faith, more contrition, and a warmer desire of deliverance from its temptations and from its wretchedness. Prayer is neither a secret nor a science which we learn from men; nor is it an art, or private method, upon which it is necessary to consult skilful teachers, in order to be master of its rules and precepts. . . . Prayer is a duty upon which we are all born instructed: the rules of this divine science are written solely in our hearts; and the Spirit of God is the sole master to teach it.

A soul, who is penetrated with the greatness of God, struck with the terror of his judgments, touched with his infinite mercies, who only knows to humble himself before him, to acknowledge, in the simplicity of his heart, his goodness and wonders, to adore the orders of his providence upon him, to accept before him of the crosses and afflictions imposed upon him by the wisdom of his councils; who knows no prayer more sublime than to be sensible before God of all the corruption of his heart; to groan over his own hardness of heart, and opposition to all good; to entreat of him, with fervent faith, to change him, to destroy in him the *man of sin*, which, in spite of his firmest resolves, continually forces him to make so many false steps in the ways of God: a soul of this description is a thousand times more

instructed in the knowledge of prayer than all the teachers themselves, and may say, with the prophet, *I have more understanding than all my teachers.* He speaks to his God as a friend to a friend; he is sorry for having offended him; he upbraids himself for not having, as yet, sufficient force to renounce all to please him; he takes no pride in the sublimity of his thoughts; he leaves his heart to speak, and gives way to all its tenderness before the only object of his love. Even when his mind wanders, his heart watches and speaks for him: his very disgusts become a prayer, through the feelings which are then excited in his heart: he is tenderly affected, he sighs, he is displeased with, and a burden to, himself: he feels the weight of his bonds, he exerts himself as if to break and throw them off; he a thousand times renews his protestations of fidelity; he blushes and is ashamed at always promising, and yet being continually faithless: such is the whole secret and the whole science of prayer.

MASSILLON.

Prayer is the breath of the new creature, and the sign of a spiritual life. Christians, let your prayers be secret, sincere, fervent, and constant. 'The way to heaven,' said a good man, 'is through the closet, and they that have been eminent in piety have been excellent in prayer. Holy David would not let a morning pass without prayer; yea, three times a day he was at this blessed duty. It was his element and constant employment. Your prayer must be fervent, if it be effectual. Prayer without fervency, is a bullet without powder, or as a bird without wings, that cannot mount up into the air. Holy fire must be put to thy daily sacrifice. God answers by fire. He that looks upon the heart, regards the manner of your prayers more than the number of your prayers. Cold slight mumbling over a few petitions, either out of custom, or to stop the voice of conscience, will not avail.' Christians, the time that you spend with God in secret, is the sweetest time, and best improved. Therefore, if thou lovest thy life, be in love with prayer. Resolve to spend some time with God in private every day.

JOHN FOX.

The Spirit of Prayer.

How may we know when a soul gets near the seat of God in prayer?

I answer, there will be some or all these attendants of nearness to God.

1. There will be an inward sense of the several glories of God, and suitable exercises of grace in the soul. For when we get near to God, we see him, we are in his presence; he is then, as it were, before the eyes of the soul, even as the soul is at all times before the eyes of God. There will be something of such a spiritual sense of the presence of God, as we shall have when our souls are dismissed from the prison of this flesh, and see him face to face, though in a far less degree: it is something that resembles the future vision of God in the blessed world of spirits; and those souls who have had much intimacy with God in prayer, will tell you that they know in some measure what heaven is. The soul, when it gets near to God, even to his seat, beholds several of his glories displayed there; for it is a seat of *majesty*, a seat of *judgment*, and a seat of *mercy*. . . .

I proceed now to the second sign or attendant of holy nearness to God in prayer.

2. When a soul comes near to God in prayer, there will generally be some sweet taste of the special love of God, and warm returns of love again to God from the soul. The soul that comes near to God, is not satisfied merely with low degrees of faith and hope, with some feeble dependence, and some faint expectations of mercy; it can hardly leave God till it has an assurance. Faith and hope in the mercy of God, are different from that joy that arises from the immediate sensations of divine love. The Psalmist, in Psalm lxiii. 1, 2, &c. seems to have a reference to both these particulars together, which I have already mentioned. *My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee;—to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* I have seen thee in the sanctuary as sitting upon a throne of majesty, on a seat of judgment and of grace; I have seen thy power and thy glory there; and I have seen something more than this, I have tasted some special loving-kindness, and that *loving-kindness is better than life, therefore my lips shall praise thee.* I have had a sense of the special love of God shed abroad in my soul, I have known his love is exercised toward me, therefore my soul is full of praise. God will seldom let a soul that is got so near

him by holy labour and fervency of spirit, go away merely with hope and dependence, without some sacred delight and joy.

A saint that has drawn near to God in worship will tell you his own rich experiences, and say, 'When I found him whom my soul loveth, I was constrained to break forth into these sweet expressions, *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine*; for I love him above all things, and *my love is but the effect of his*. In that blessed hour I felt, and I was assured of that mutual relation between God and me: I found so much of his image stamped on me, that I knew I was the Lord's; whence I rejoice in the full persuasion of his love. I know he loves me, *for his sanctifying Spirit hath witnessed with my spirit, that I am one of his children*; and I know that I love him, for my spirit witnesseth also as an echo to his Spirit, that I have chosen him for my Father, my Ruler, and my God, and have surrendered myself to him on his own terms; and I address him as *my Father*, with words of the choicest affection, and of most endeared sentiments of soul.'

When a person, in whom grace is wrought, gets so near to God, and sees this God in his own loveliness, and in his kindest perfections, there are some new divine passions kindled in the soul towards this God, towards this first beauty, towards this original of all perfection and goodness; and God will seldom let one come so near him, without shewing him the love of his heart; and the name of the devout worshipper graven, as it were, *on the palms of his hands*, or in the book of his mercy. He speaks to the soul in his own divine language, *Son, or daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. O man, thou art greatly beloved. I am your God, and you are my people. I have bought thee dear, and thou art mine. I have created thee, O Jacob; I have formed thee, O Israel; I have redeemed thee, O believer, and thou art for ever mine*. And such discoveries of the love of God to the soul draw out still more love from the soul towards God, and raise more sacred exercises of divine love in one hour, than a whole year of common devotions can do; and the saint learns more of this sacred sensation of the love of God, than years of cold and common devotions would teach him.

3. When the soul gets near to God in

prayer, there will be a hatred of sin at the very thoughts of it, and holy meltings and mournings under the remembrance of its own sins. 'How hateful does sin appear,' will the soul say, 'now I am come so near to the seat of a holy God! Never did I see sin in so dark and so odious colours, as this hour reveals and discovers to me; never did I so sensibly behold the abomination that is in all sins as now I do; I never saw it so contrary to all that is in God, to his holiness, to his glory, to his justice, and to his grace. O wretch that I am, that I should ever have indulged iniquity! That I should ever have borne with such an infinite evil in my heart! That I should ever take delight in such mischief against God! Now I hate and abhor myself because of sin. *O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night*, because I have been such a sinner so long, and because I am so much a sinner still!' The heart of a saint that comes near to God is pained at the memory of old sins, and together with a present sweetness of divine love, there is a sort of anguish at the thoughts of past iniquities. A present God will make past sins look dreadful and heinous; therefore it is that sin looks so little to us, and appears so light a thing, because we seldom get near to the seat of God, and bring our iniquities to that divine light. . . .

4. At such a time there is a power and virtue enters into the soul, coming from a present God, to resist sin, and to oppose great temptation. *I can do all things, if Christ be near to strengthen me*, says the Apostle, Phil. iv. 13. When I was afflicted with the buffeting of Satan, says the same Apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9, for this I applied myself to the mercy-seat, and I got near to the throne of grace; there I pleaded with my God, and I received this answer from him, *My grace is sufficient for thee*. Then, says he, *I could glory in infirmities and in persecutions for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong*; when I feel my own weakness, and see Almighty strength near me, and engaged on my side, then I grow strong in courage, and with success encounter my most powerful adversaries. *I will not fear*, says David, *though thousands have set themselves against me*, if thou art with me, my Strength, and my Rock: *I will walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no*

evil, for thou art with me, Psal. xxiii. 4. Divine courage and fortitude are increased abundantly by coming so near to the throne of God.

There is a zeal for God enters into the soul at such a season, and the soul is more desirous to lay out itself for the glory of God at such a time. Moses had drawn near to God in the mount, and had been with him forty days; when he came down from the mount, he beheld the people filled with idolatry, and he brake the tables of stone in an impatience of zeal; his zeal for God was so great, he hardly knew what he did; his zeal for God was kindled high, because he had been so near to God, and just conversing with him. So Isa. vi. 8, when that great saint had been near to God, and had seen him in the glories of his holiness, and had some courage and confidence in his love; 'Now I will go,' says he, 'upon any difficult message; *here am I, send me*, though it be to fulfil the hardest service.'

There will be generally all these attendants of great nearness to God, namely, power against temptation, strength against sin, zeal for the glory of God in the world, and ability to perform difficult duties.

5. There will be a spiritual frame introduced into the heart, and a distance from all carnal things. 'Stand by,' saith the soul to all this world, 'whilst I go to seek my God; but when I have found him, then the world of itself, as to all the temporal concerns of it, vanishes and goes out of sight. When I get so near to heaven, this earth is so small a point, that it cannot be seen, and those comforts among the creatures, that were fair as the moon, or bright as the larger stars, are vanished and lost, and disappear under the brighter light of this Sun.' Created beauties, with all their little glimmerings, tempt the soul toward them, when God is absent; as a twinkling candle entices the silly fly at midnight to hover about the rays of it: but the candle faints under the broad beams of rising daylight; it has no power to attract those little buzzing insects in the morning, and it is quite invisible at noon. So the very approach of God makes creatures appear more contemptible and worthless in the esteem of a devout Christian; a God near at hand will drive the creatures afar off; and a present God will command the world to utter absence. None of the tempting vanities of life come in sight, and some-

times not the most important concerns of it remain before the eye of the saint, when God appears, and fills the view and prospect of his spirit. The soul is taken up with spiritual things, therefore carnal ones vanish; it is entertained and filled with the majesty of God, the riches of grace, redeeming grace; with the glory of Christ Jesus, the beauty of his person, the honour of his characters, his various excellencies, and the supereminence of his offices, both in the constitution and discharge of them; the soul is then warmed with a zealous concern for the church of Christ, and big with designs for the honour of God, while it forgets the world.

Or at such a season as this, when we get near to God in prayer, if we think of any of the creatures, it is all in order to the honour of God. If I think of a brother, or father, or child, 'O may they all be instruments in thine hand, for thy honour here among men, and for ever among blessed angels.' The soul does not ask for riches and glories on earth for them; but, 'may they live in thy sight, O Lord!' If it thinks of the comforts of life, or blessings of prosperity, 'O let *holiness to the Lord* be written upon them all; for I would not have one of them, but what may subserve thine honour in the world!' If the soul thinks of its pain, and sorrows, and reproaches, it longs for the sanctification of them at present, and the removal of them in due season, that it may serve its God the better. Thus the soul is, as it were, taken out of *self*, when it gets near to God.

'Let me have the conveniencies of life,' says the Christian, 'not so much for my ease, as that I may better advance thine honour.' The soul grows weaned from self at such a time; it breaks out of the narrow circle of self, when it gets nigh to God. If it thinks of the ministry or of ordinances, 'Lord, let that ministry be for the advancement of thy name! Lord, let these ordinances be for the increase of thy glory in the world, for the advancement of grace in my heart, and bring me nearer to heaven! If it thinks of the kingdom, or the parliament, powers or princes in this world, it is with this design, that God may be glorified in the courts of princes, and in parliaments, and honoured in armies and nations, known and unknown.' Thus the soul always keeps within sight of God; it still keeps all its designs within the circle of God, and aims

still at the glories of its heavenly Father. If it thinks of life or of death, 'I would not ask life,' says the saint, 'but to glorify thee; nor death, but to glorify thee better, and to enjoy more of thee.'

Thus, when the soul is near to God, it is in a divine light that it sees all things, it is still with a design for God; and when it indulges the thoughts toward any creature, it is without turning aside a moment from its God. Thus carnal things are taken into the mind, and spiritualised by the presence of God, the infinite Spirit, when the soul approaches so near to his seat.

6. There will then be a fixedness of heart in duty without wandering, and liveliness without tiring. At other times of common and usual worship, when the saint is in too formal and too cold a frame, the heart roves perpetually, and is soon weary; but when we get near to God, then we have a little emblem of heaven within us, where they worship God day and night without interruption and without weariness. When we wait upon God at this rate, we are still mounting up higher and higher, *as with eagles' wings; we walk first without fainting, and then run without wearying; at last, we fly as an eagle*, and make haste to the fuller possession of our God, Isa. xl. 31. The soul is then detained in the presence of God with overpowering delight, and it cannot be taken away from the object of its dearest satisfaction. This is a joy above all other joys, above all the joys of sense, above all the joys of the intellectual world that are not divine and holy. There are some pleasures that arise from philosophical and intellectual notions, that are superior to the pleasures of sense; but the pleasure of being near to God in devotion far transcends all these.

Animal nature, at such a season, may be worn out, and faint and die under it; but the mind is not weary. It is possible for divine transports to rise so high as to break this feeble frame of flesh, and dissolve it; and there have been instances of persons that have been near to a dissolution of mortality under the power of divine ecstasies; but the soul has not been faint, has felt no weariness.

There are at such a season most pleasurable thoughts of heaven; there are some bright glimpses of that blessed state when a Christian attains this nearness to God; for heaven is a state of nearness to God, everlasting and uninterrupted; nor

are the blessed inhabitants of that world ever weary of their company, or their business; and thus, when there is any thing akin to heaven brought down to the saints in this mortal state, they know it cannot be uninterrupted and perpetual; and therefore there is a desire of frequent returns of such seasons as these are, while they are here on earth. And as Christ, the bridegroom, speaks to his saints in the language of Solomon, *Let me see thy face often, my spouse, my beloved, let me hear thy voice*, Song ii. 14, and viii. 13, so the saint says to his God at such a season, 'O may I often see thy face in this manner! may I often hear such a voice as this is from thee, for I know not how to live without it!' Flee, my beloved Saviour, and make haste to a speedy return, and let there be an uninterrupted and everlasting converse between God and my soul.

Lastly, There is at such a season oftentimes a pouring out of the soul before God, with some freedom in the gift, as well as the grace of prayer. Mere sighs and groans are for persons at a distance; but when we get near to God, we speak to him even in his ear; and the heart is full, and the tongue overflows.

I grant there may be the spirit of prayer assisting a poor soul that cannot get near to God, but still cries after him, when he is hidden, and expresses itself only in *sighs and in groanings unutterable*; so the Apostle tells us, Rom. viii. 26, *The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered*. And thus it may be, while God hides himself, while there is a veil concealing God from our eyes, while there is any special temptation, like a mountain, that separates between God and our souls, he may send his Spirit to work us up to earnest desires and longings after him.

But when this *Spirit of Prayer* has brought the soul near, when God has been pleased to turn aside the veil, to remove the mountain, and to discover himself in all his glory, beauty, and love, then there will be generally the *gift of prayer* also in exercise by the assistance of the promised Spirit; and such persons many times are able to address themselves to God with much freedom, and to pour out the soul before God in proper words, notwithstanding at other times they appear to have but weak capacities. When they have such affecting sights of their own sin and guilt,

and such surprising views of the mercy of God manifested in them in particular, and at the same time when they look upon all things round them with a design for the glory of God; they are both naturally and divinely taught to pour out their souls before God, and represent their cares and circumstances to him in affecting language.

I must conclude this discourse before I proceed to the other heads which were proposed: but I would not willingly leave it without a caution or two, and one reflection.

The first *caution* is this: 'Let not the humble mourning Christian, who walks carefully with God, under much darkness and fear, charge himself with utter distance and estrangement from the throne of grace, because he does not feel all these sacred passions and powers of nature in lively exercise, while he bows his knees before the Lord:' for I have described this blessed privilege in the sublime glory and beauty of it, so as it has been often attained and enjoyed by persons eminent in grace and religion, and especially such as have had lively affections, and the powers of animal nature in a good degree sanctified, and subservient to the devotions of the soul. But where the natural spirits are low and sinking, and where temptations and darkness hang heavy on the mind, the Christian may truly draw near to God, so far as to find a gracious acceptance with him, and may fetch secret divine communications from the mercy-seat to maintain his spiritual life; though he feels but little of these sensations of heavenly pleasure, these more vigorous efforts of devotion, or joy. Yet let him neither deny nor despise those more elevated enjoyments of soul, those near and blessed approaches to the seat of God, with which others have been favoured.

The second *caution* shall be addressed to those, who feel much of rapture and transport in their hours of secret piety. I entreat, 'That they would not imagine themselves so often to enjoy this unspeakable privilege of holy nearness to God in worship, if they do not sensibly find such an increase of holiness, as may prove effectually that they have been with God.' If they have been conversing with their Maker, like Moses in the mount, there will be a shining of holiness upon the face

of their souls. To pretend therefore to have enjoyed much of God in the closet, and to come down amongst men peevish and fretful, or immediately to betray a carnal and covetous, or an haughty and untractable spirit; these are things of so inconsistent a nature, that the succeeding iniquity spoils the devotion, and almost destroys the pretence to any sublime degree of it. Such persons had need look well to themselves, and make a narrow search within, whether their hearts be sincere with God or not, lest they build all their hopes upon the flashy efforts of animal nature, coupled with the thoughts of some sacred objects, and tacked on to a divine meditation. DR. WATTS.

Great efficacy of Prayer.

PRAYER eases the soul in times of distress, when it is oppressed with griefs and fears, by giving them vent, and that in so advantageous a way, emptying them into the bosom of God. The very vent, were it but into the air, gives ease; or speak your grief to a statue rather than smother it; much more ease does it give to pour it forth into the lap of a confidential and sympathising friend, even though unable to help us; yet still more, of one who can help; and, of all friends, our God is, beyond all comparison, the surest, and most affectionate, and most powerful. So Isa. lxiii. 9, both compassion and effectual salvation are expressed: *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* And so, resting on his love, power, and gracious promises, the soul quiets itself in God upon this assurance, that it is not in vain to seek him, and that *he despiseth not the sighing of the poor*, Psal. xii. 5.

The soul is more spiritually affected with its own condition, by laying it open before the Lord; becomes more deeply sensible of sin, and ashamed in his sight, in confessing it before him; more dilated and enlarged to receive the mercies sued for, as the *opening wide of the mouth of the soul, that it may be filled*; more disposed to observe the Lord in answering, and to bless him, and trust on him, upon the renewed experiences of his regard to its distresses and desires.

All the graces of the Spirit are, in prayer,

stirred and exercised, and, by exercise, strengthened and increased; faith, in applying the Divine promises, which are the very ground that the soul goes upon to God, hope looking out to their performance, and love particularly expressing itself in that sweet converse, and delighting in it, as love doth in the company of the person beloved, thinking all hours too short in speaking with him. Oh, how the soul is refreshed with freedom of speech with its beloved Lord! And as it delights in that, so it is continually advanced and grows by each meeting and conference, beholding the excellency of God, and relishing the pure and sublime pleasures that are to be found in near communion with him. Looking upon the Father in the face of Christ, and using him as a mediator in prayer, as still it must, it is drawn to further admiration of that bottomless love, which found out that way of agreement, that *new and living way* of our access, when all was shut up, and we must otherwise have been shut out for ever. And then, the affectionate expressions of that reflex love, seeking to find that vent in prayer, do kindle higher, and being as it were fanned and blown up, rise to a greater, and higher, and purer flame, and so tend upwards the more strongly. David, as he doth profess his love to God in prayer, in his Psalms, so no doubt it grew in the expressing; *I will love thee, O Lord my strength*, Psal. xviii. 1. And in Psal. cxvi. 1, he doth raise an incentive of love out of this very consideration of the correspondence of prayer—*I love the Lord because he hath heard*; and he resolves thereafter upon persistence in that course,—*therefore will I call upon him as long as I live*. And as the graces of the Spirit are advanced in prayer by their actings, so, for this further reason, because prayer sets the soul particularly near unto God in Jesus Christ. It is then in his presence, and being much with God in this way, it is powerfully assimilated to him by converse with him; as we readily contract their habits with whom we have much intercourse, especially if they be such as we singularly love and respect. Thus the soul is moulded further to the likeness of God, is stamped with clearer characters of him, by being much with him, becomes more like God, more holy and spiritual, and, like Moses, brings back a bright shining from the mount.

And not only thus, by a natural influence, doth prayer work this advantage, but even by a federal efficacy, suing for, and upon suit obtaining, supplies of grace as the chief good, and besides, all other needful mercies. It is a real means of receiving. *Whatsoever ye shall ask, that will I do*, says our Saviour, John xiv. 13. God having established this intercourse, has engaged his truth and goodness in it, that if they call on him, they shall be heard and answered. If they prepare the heart to call, he will incline his ear to hear. Our Saviour hath assured us, that we may build upon his goodness, upon the affection of a father in him; *He will give good things to them that ask*, says one Evangelist, (Matt. vii. 11,) *give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, says another (Luke xi. 13); as being *the good*, indeed the highest of gifts, and the sum of all good things, and that for which his children are most earnest supplicants. Prayer for grace doth, as it were, set the mouth of the soul to the spring, draws from Jesus Christ, and is replenished out of his fulness, thirsting after it, and drawing from it that way.

LEIGHTON.

The efficacy therefore of prayer, to bring light and wisdom into the mind, peace into the conscience, submission into the will, and purity into the affections; to keep our garments clean, our armour bright, and our hearts joyful; to make us strong for the conflict, for service, or for suffering; to obtain sufficiency for our place and work, and a blessing on our endeavours; to secure peace with our enemies, or protection against them; to carry every point that is truly good for us; to bring down blessings on our families, friends, and country; to procure peace and prosperity to the church, the conversion of sinners, and the spread of the Gospel; and for all things which we can desire or conceive;—must be allowed by every man who reverences the Scriptures, or knows what it is *to walk with God*. Did men speculate and dispute less, and pray more, their souls would be *like a watered garden*; fruitful, joyful, beautiful, and fragrant. Prayer is the first breath of divine life: it is the pulse of the believing soul, the best criterion of health or sickness, vigour or debility. By prayer we *draw water with joy from the wells of salvation*: by prayer faith

puts forth its energy, in apprehending the promised blessings, and receiving from the Redeemer's fulness; in leaning on his almighty arm, and making *his name our strong tower*; and in overcoming the world, the flesh, and the devil. All other means of grace are made effectual by prayer: every doctrine and instruction produces its effect, in proportion as this is attended to; every grace revives or languishes according to the same rule. Our grand conflict with Satan and our own hearts is about prayer: the sinner feels less reluctance, and meets with less resistance, in all other means of grace, than in retiring to *pour out his heart* secretly before God; and the believer will find his chief difficulty to consist in continuing instant and fervent in this spiritual exercise. If he succeed here, all else will eventually give place before him, and turn out to his benefit and comfort.

REV. T. SCOTT.

On Private Prayer.

Thou when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and shut the door. And the reason is plain. He who would pray, must first retire. The spirit of the world and the spirit of prayer are contrary the one to the other; and experience will teach any one that he cannot well pray in a crowd. Business, or pleasure, or even common conversation, if it be about the things of this world, and continue for any long time, will strangely indispose the mind for devotion; and the soul, before she can take her flight to heaven, must plume and balance her wings by holy meditation. She must rally her scattered and dissipated thoughts, and fix them on the business she is going about. She must consider the nature of God, to whom she is to pray; of herself who is to pray to him; and of those things for which she is to pray to him. She must know the sins she has been guilty of, to confess them; and the graces she stands in need of, to petition for them. All this is not to be done but by deep meditation; and meditation, which is the mother of devotion, is the daughter of retirement. They who do not meditate, cannot pray; and they who do not retire, can do neither. God help and have mercy on all those who are in this most wretched and deplorable state; as all must be, who pass their days in a

senseless round of vain amusements and diversions, in a continual hurry and dissipation of thought, ignorant of the benefits and comforts of the closet, and therefore ignorant of the true state of their minds, ignorant of their Saviour, ignorant of their duty, ignorant of every thing which they were sent into the world to learn. Thus they live, and—thus they die! If, therefore, we conceive a dread of such a life and such a death (and too great a dread we cannot conceive), let us learn of holy Daniel, to commune with our own heart, and with God, in our chamber. And then let us judge ourselves to have made some progress in the divine life, when the pleasures we find there are preferred, as every experienced Christian knows they ought to be preferred, to all the pleasures the world can offer.

BP. HORNE.

Advantages of Family Prayer.

FAMILY prayer is a most important means of propagating piety to posterity. Children are creatures of imitation. They love to copy all that they see in others. The characters of unborn generations may depend on your conduct in this matter. Eph. vi. 4; Prov. xxii. 6. David says of the Lord, *He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generations to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments*, Psal. lxxviii. 5—7. Perhaps the present degraded condition of the millions of immortal souls now living in idolatry, with all their guilt and misery, might be traced up to the neglect of family instruction, as one principal cause.

Family worship, when duly conducted, is attended with many happy effects on your whole family. No wonder that those who neglect this are continually troubled with the misconduct and perverseness of those under them and about them; no wonder that jarrings, dissensions, and other disagreeable circumstances, are continually disquieting them. It is just what might be expected. How can they who neglect the worship of God in their fa-

milies, look for peace or comfort in them? I am sure, also, that I may confidently appeal to those who have regular and daily family prayer, that, when conducted in a simple and devout spirit, it has a tendency to remove, or allay, all those unhappy passions to which our common nature is subject, and which, more or less, appear in every family. It unites the members of the family together, gives the head of it a feeling of tenderness and affection for those under him, and makes them esteem and love him. Some masters are, on this account, almost considered as angels in their families. Cecil says of family worship rightly conducted, 'It may be used as an engine of vast power in a family. It diffuses a sympathy through the members. It calls the mind off from the deadening effects of worldly affairs. It arrests every member with a morning and evening sermon, in the midst of all the hurries and cares of life. It says, 'There is a God!' 'There is a spiritual world!' 'There is a life to come!' It fixes the idea of responsibility in the mind. It furnishes a tender and judicious father, or master, with an opportunity of gently glancing at faults, where a direct admonition might be inexpedient. It enables him to relieve the weight with which subordination or service often sits on the minds of inferiors.'

Family prayer gains for us the presence and blessing of our Lord. There is a promise of his presence, which appears peculiarly applicable to this duty, Matt. xviii. 19, 20. Many have found in family worship that help and that communion with God which they have sought for with less effect in private prayer. It was the experience of one Christian, 'I find more of the presence of God, and more of the real spirit of prayer, in praying with my family, than in almost any other means of grace.' Surely, the Christian, who really loves his Saviour, would regularly call his family together to pray with him, from this consideration alone, that he might enjoy more of his Lord's presence.

Dr. Buchanan strikingly contrasts a family which worships God, and a family which worships him not; and the excellence of the remarks will justify the length of the quotation. 'How painful it is to reflect,' he says, 'that there should be, in this kingdom, many domestic societies among whom the worship of the

Deity is not known, in whose houses no grateful accents are ever heard, no exultation of heart for the Divine goodness! There are indeed, accents of exultation and mirth; and the harp, and the viol, and the tabret, and the pipe, are in their feasts; but there is no remembrance of God: they regard not the operation of his hands. While even inanimate nature, in a certain sense, offereth praise to the great Creator, and fulfilleth his will; these men pass through life in silence! Insensible to the mercies, or judgments, or power, or providence of the unseen God; yes, more insensible than the inhabitants of heathen lands, upon whom the light of truth has never shined.

'How different is the scene which is presented in those happy families, where the voice of prayer and thanksgiving consecrates every day! where the word of God is devoutly read, and infants are taught to lisp their Creator's praise! There, from day to day, domestic peace and love, and harmony, are cherished by the sublimest motives, and strengthened by the tenderest and the most powerful sanctions.—On the hallowed day they repair, with gladness of heart, to their respective places of worship, and mingle with assemblies which meet with much more delight for praise and prayer than other assemblies for worldly mirth.—And let not the world condemn, or disturb their holy exercise: for we learn from Scripture that it is from such families and assemblies, who are the salt of the earth, worshipping in the midst of us, that the incense of prayer ascends in behalf of the country and is accepted in heavenly places through the intercession of the Mediator.'

REV. E. BICKERSTETH.

The value of Intercessory Prayer.

THE true treasury of the church is the common stock of prayers with which they all trade to heaven for one another. O what a rich merchant, then, is the saint who hath a stock going on in so many hands! In heaven, Christ is heard at prayer for him; on earth, his brethren. What can this man want? Christ hath interest in his Father's heart, that he can deny him nothing; the saints such interest in Christ, that he will not deny them; so the Christian's trade goes on smoothly in both worlds. It is not only our duty, then,

to pray for others, but also to desire the prayers of others for ourselves. Indeed, that other saints obtain by their prayers for us, what sometimes we do not by our own, is clear from Job xlii. 8. If a Paul turns beggar, and desires the remembrance of others for him, who then needs it not? Nay, Paul at Rome, sends for prayers as far as to the saints at Ephesus; and how large a heart he had for those whose *face he never saw in flesh*, he tells us, Col. ii. 1; O how many are there when time was, could beg prayers of every Christian they met! nothing but wants and complaints could be heard from them, which made them beg help of all they knew to pray their corruptions down and their graces up; but now they have left the beggar's trade, and reign in an imaginary kingdom of their self-conceited sufficiency! But how great is the benefit and the comfort to the Christian, when in any great strait of temptation and affliction, to get some other of the faithful to give a lift with them at the duty of prayer! Thus Daniel, ii. 18, when required to interpret the king's dream, makes the thing known to his three brethren, that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret. Thus Esther sets the Jews in Shushan to pray for her, iv. 16. So our Apostle, in many of his epistles, desires the saints to carry his name with them to the throne of grace, Rom. xv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 10, 11; Col. iv. 3; Phil. i. 19.

GURNALL.

Ejaculatory Prayer preventive of those distractions so common between stated duties.

'A MAN who is praying,' says Bernard, 'should behave himself as if he were entering into the court of heaven, where he sees the Lord on his throne, surrounded with ten thousand of his angels and saints ministering unto him.' When thou comest from a duty in which thy heart has been toying and wandering, thou mayest say, 'Verily God was in this place, and I knew it not.' Suppose all the impertinences and vanities which have passed through thine heart in duty were written out, and interlined with thy petitions, couldest thou have the face to present them to God? Should thy tongue but utter all the thoughts of thy heart in prayer, would not men abhor thee? But thy thoughts are vocal to God, Psal. cxxxix. 2. If thou wert petitioning the king for thy

life, would it not provoke him to see thee playing with thy bandstrings, or catching at every fly that lights upon thy clothes, whilst thou art speaking to him about such serious matters? O think seriously on that Scripture, Psalm lxxxix. 7; *God is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him!* Why did God ascend in thunderings and lightnings, and dark clouds upon Sinai? Exod. xix. 16, 18. Why did the mountains smoke under him; the people quake and tremble round about him; yea, Moses himself not exempted; but to teach the people, this great truth in Heb. xii. 28, 29; *Let us have grace whereby we may serve him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire!* Present God thus before thee, and thy vain heart will quickly be brought to a more serious frame. But what is the reason our hearts are so dull, careless, and wandering, when we come to hear or pray, but because there have been such long intermissions in our communion with God, by reason whereof the heart is out of a praying frame? If that spiritual warmth, those holy impressions we carry from God in one duty, were but preserved to kindle another duty, it would be of marvellous advantage to keep the heart intent and serious with God. For this purpose those intermediate ejaculations betwixt stated and solemn duties, are of most sweet and excellent use. By these one duty is as it were linked to another, and so the soul wraps up itself in a chain of duties. That Christian seldom misses his mark in solemn duty, who shoots up many of these darts in the intervals of duty. It is an excellent commendation Christ bestows upon the spouse, Cant. iv. 11, *Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb.* On which text one gives this sweet note: 'The honey-comb drops actually but sometimes, but it always hangs full of sweet drops ready to fall.' If our ejaculations were more, our lamentations on this account would be fewer.

FLAVEL.

Habitual Prayer recommended.

In every thing by prayer and supplication make your requests known to God. We should express our gratitude for the blessings, which he confers on us; we should beseech him to enable us to bear with patience and resignation the

trials and sufferings, to which the common lot of humanity will expose us. Prayer will be *a pillar of a cloud* before us *in the day* of prosperity, to cast the shade of humility over the natural presumption of the heart; and *a pillar of fire in the night* of affliction, to enlighten the gloom, which threatens to involve us in despondency. The more we pray, the more delight we shall find in that holy exercise. It is this habit, that will make us *rejoice in the Lord*, and cast a gleam of comfort in the deepest gloom of misery. It is not expected that we should confine ourselves to the forms of prayer, which we have learnt; in repeating these, our thoughts will often wander on worldly objects; a train of ideas will imperceptibly steal our thoughts from heaven. But if we address our God in our own words, suggested by our own feelings, and our own wants; if we open our hearts to him, we shall keep our thoughts fixed upon his awful presence. We are the best judges of our own situation, and of our infirmities: we must have the best conviction of the sins, to which we are subject; of the temptations, to which we are exposed; and the deepest sense of the blessings, which we have received from the hand of God. Every time is fit for this profitable employment; if we have the disposition, we shall find the opportunity to pray. Can we behold the expanse of heaven and earth, without raising our thoughts to the great Creator? Can we observe the growth of our corn, the flourishing state of our cattle, without turning the eye of gratitude to him, from whose bounty we receive these blessings? Can we take a solitary walk or ride, without conversing with our God? Can we perform any work, without considering that we are under his inspection, and without entreating his blessing on our labours? Can we rise in the morning, when we are turning a new leaf in the volume of life, without dedicating the day to his honour and service? Can we lie down at night, and fall into the arms of sleep, the brother of death, without committing ourselves to the protection of our Maker? Can we see our children around us, without entreating their Father and our Father, their God and our God, to make them the staff of our age, and as they advance in years, to make them grow in wisdom and in piety?

These prayers, however, though warm from the heart, and produced by our par-

ticular feelings, will not preclude the use of written forms, even in private. The Common Prayer Book abounds with admirable addresses to God, adapted to almost every circumstance in life. But the greatest fund of pious ejaculations, of earnest petitions, of warm appeals, of humble supplications to Heaven, is to be found in the Psalms. There is not a situation which these divine effusions do not embrace.—Are we in distress, forsaken, and forlorn? 'Unite with the Psalmist in these expressions: *My God, my God, look upon me: why hast thou forsaken me; and art so far from my health, and from the words of my complaint?—Consider and hear me, O my God!—Thou art my succour; haste Thou to help me!—Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice!—O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint!—O Lord, let it be thy pleasure to deliver me; make haste, O Lord, to help me!—Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling! Hold not thy peace at my tears!*

Do we wish to express our gratitude for blessings received?—*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, give the praise, for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake.—Praise the Lord, O my soul: while I live will I praise the Lord; yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing praises unto my God! Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities, who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness!*

Do we wish to confess our sins to the God of mercy?—*I will acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and my unrighteousness have I not hid.—I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord, and so Thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin.—I acknowledge my fault, and my sin is ever before me.—Innumerable troubles are come about me; my sins have taken such hold upon me, that I am not able to look up; yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me.—My misdeeds prevail against me; O be Thou merciful unto my sins!—Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

Do we entreat pardon and mercy?—

Call to remembrance, O Lord, thy tender mercies, and thy loving kindnesses, which have been ever of old.—O remember not the sins and offences of my youth; but according to thy mercy, think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness!—Look upon my adversity and misery, and forgive me all my sin!—Withdraw not thou thy mercy from me, O Lord, let it be thy pleasure to deliver me; make haste, O Lord, to help me! Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies, do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.—Turn thy face from my sin, and put out all my misdeeds! If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with thee; therefore shalt thou be feared.

Do we wish for spiritual comfort, direction, and assistance?—*Lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not in death.—Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me! Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me! O give me the comfort of thy help again, and stablish me with thy free Spirit!—Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth; O knit my heart unto thee, that I may fear thy name.—Teach me to do the thing, that pleaseth thee, for thou art my God; let thy loving Spirit lead me forth unto the land of righteousness!*

Are we earnestly intent on the salvation of our soul?—*Turn thou, O Lord, and deliver my soul! O save me for thy mercies' sake!—Forsake me not, O Lord, my God!—be not thou far from me. Haste thee to help me, O Lord God of my salvation!—O Lord, let it be thy pleasure to deliver me; make haste, O Lord, to help me!—Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation!—Comfort the soul of thy servant; for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul!*

Do we wish to express our trust in God?—*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.—In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion: deliver me in thy righteousness! Bow down thine ear to me; make haste to deliver me: and be thou my strong rock and house of defence, that thou mayest*

save me! For thou art my strong rock and my castle; be thou also my guide, and lead me for thy name's sake.—Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in God; for I will yet thank him, which is the help of my countenance, and my God!—In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, thy comforts have refreshed my soul!—Thou, Lord, art the thing that I long for; thou art my hope even from my youth.—I will love thee, O Lord, my strength! The Lord is my stony rock and my defence, my Saviour, my God, and my might, in whom I will trust: my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge.—Thou hast given me the defence of thy salvation; thy right hand also shall hold me up, and thy loving correction shall make me great!

Do we wish for life?—*O spare me a little that I may recover my strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen!—O stablish me according to thy word, that I may live!—O let my soul live!—but observe the consequent engagement: and it shall praise thee.*

Do we wish to express our sense of the universal presence of God? *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit; or whither shall I go from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to hell, thou art there also.—If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost part of the sea; even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.—If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me, then shall my night be turned to day.*

REV. DR. VALPY.

On answer to Prayer.

OUR too general neglect of looking for answers to what we ask, shews how little we are in earnest in our petitions. 'None ask in earnest,' says Trail, 'but they will try how they speed. There is no surer and plainer mark of trifling in prayer, than when men are careless what they get by prayer.'—A husbandman is not content without the harvest; a marksman will observe whether the ball hits the target; a physician watches the effect of the medicine which he gives; one who writes or applies to another for any temporal good eagerly expects the answer; and shall the Christian be careless about the effect of his labour?

Every prayer of the Christian, made in faith according to the will of God, for that which God hath promised, offered up in the name of Jesus Christ, and under the influence of his Spirit, whether for temporal or for spiritual blessings, is, or will be, fully answered. God always answers the general design and intention of his people's prayers, in doing that which, all things considered, is most for his own glory, and their spiritual and eternal welfare. As we never find that Jesus Christ rejected a single supplicant who came to him for mercy; so we believe that no prayer made in his name will be in vain. 'The answer of prayer may be approaching, though we discern not its coming. The seed in winter that lies under ground, is taking root in order to a spring and harvest, though it appear not above ground, but seems dead and lost.'

The time, or the mode of granting the request, may vary indeed from our wishes; but yet the prayer made as above stated, is heard, the desire so put up is fulfilled.

Bishop Taylor observes, 'As for those irregular donations of good things which wicked persons ask for, and have, they are either no mercies, but instruments of cursing and crime; or else they are designs of grace, intended to convince them of their unworthiness, and so, if they become not instruments of their conversion, they are aggravations of their ruin.'

In asking for spiritual blessings, for repentance, faith, humility, holiness, love, &c., we are sure of having the particular request granted, for *this is the will of God, even your sanctification*. Yet in these things the way of granting the request may, at first sight, seem like a denial.

Remarkable, sometimes, are the ways in which prayers for spiritual blessings are answered. We pray for an increase of faith, patience, resignation, or other Christian graces: and our trials, instead of being removed, seem greatly aggravated. The clouds grow darker and darker. But the secret supports of the Holy Spirit being afforded, we do not sink under our burden. And in the midst of all these trials, the very things which we asked are given. There is no exercise for faith when all is smooth; no room for patience and resignation when there is no suffering; the very graces which we sought, need difficulties, sorrows, and trials, in order to be manifested, exercised, and granted.

Often the very sentence of death is put upon all our hopes, before they are realised. The extremity of suffering is the point of our deliverance. . . .

The due *use of means* must be attended to, if we wish for answers to our prayers. There is a species of enthusiasm, not uncommon, and to which young or ignorant professors of religion are exposed, that is, to expect the blessing desired in prayer without any effort or exertion on our parts. But in the Bible you may mark how those who prayed used the most likely means to effect their desires. Though Jacob passes the night in prayer, he still in the morning takes the best means to pacify his brother Esau. Bishop Hall says of Moses, when Israel was about to contend with Amalek, 'I do not hear Moses say to his Joshua, Amalek is come up against us; it matters not whether thou go against him, or not; or, if thou go, whether alone or in company; or, if accompanied, whether with many or few, strong or weak; or, if strong men, whether they fight or no; I will pray on the hill: but he says, *choose us out men, and go, fight*. Then only can we hope when we have done our best; and though means cannot effect that which we desire, yet God will have us use the likeliest means on our part to effect it. Prayer, without the use of means, is a mockery of God.'

The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing, Prov. xiii. 4. Means being required, both in God's word and by the course of his providence, neglect of them is not faith, but unbelief. The patient who trusts his physician's skill, will carefully follow his directions. Believing prayer does not render exertion unnecessary, but makes it effectual; giving a divine power and blessing to that which was before a merely weak and human effort. And the right way is neither to use unlawful means, nor lawful ones irregularly, nor to trust either in them, or in our prayers; but humbly and diligently to go on in the path of duty, using those means which seem right and profitable, and trusting only in God our Saviour to bring the thing to pass, and that in his own way. His wisdom, power, and love, are infinite. His ways are often dark and mysterious to weak and fallible man; but it will ever be found in the end, *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him!* Psal. ii. 12.

But supposing after having done all,

and waited long, our prayers are still denied, what are we then to conclude?

The denial of prayer is always in mercy to the children of God. It was in kindness to David that his child was taken away. He earnestly prayed for the life of one who would have been a living monument of his shame. He eagerly longed for the preservation of Absalom; but in mercy that rebellious son, who might have ruined him, was cut off. And how frequently is the denial spiritually useful!

Goodwin observes, 'often the very denial breaks the hard heart, and brings a man nearer to God, and puts him on searching into his ways, and estate, and to see what should be amiss in his prayer; which alone is a great mercy, and better than the thing; seeing that by the loss of that one thing, he learns to pray better, and so to obtain a hundred better things afterwards.'

We lose many proofs of God's faithfulness and grace, his tenderness and compassion, by not marking the answers to our prayers in these and in other respects.

Gee thus enumerates the ends for which God may for a season hide himself from the prayers of his people.

'In reference to themselves; to increase their assiduity and ardency in prayer; to fit them for the mercy prayed for; to exercise and try their faith, patience, love, sincerity, of sanctification, and obedience; to manifest himself to them more fully, either in or after the delay; to make the benefit prayed for more precious and welcome, and useful when it comes; to remove the impediments of their receiving, or enjoying the mercy sought for; and to raise up their thoughts, their faith, hope, love, and longings, to the second appearing of Christ. In reference to others; to make up and bring in the number of those for whom the mercy is proposed; to complete the account of the church's sufferers and sufferings; to give others an example of patient and confident waiting upon God; and for the greater dismay and confusion of the adversary.'

When your prayers are not answered, let it lead you to self-examination. Perhaps the prayer may have been answered in a way you have not thought of. Perhaps you were desiring something that would only foster ambition or pride, or were merely considering ease and comfort,

without regard to spiritual edification. Or look for the cause of it in your neglect of Christ's intercession, or your ingratitude for former answers: question your own faith, the fervency of your desires, the purity of your end, the propriety of the manner in which you have offered up your petitions: yes, any thing rather than God's faithfulness: *Let God be true and every man a liar*. Again, God will not be inquired of by those who have an idol in their hearts, Isa. lix. 2; Ezek. xiv. 3. If you are living in any habitual sin, you cannot expect that your prayers should be heard.

When your prayers are answered, let it assure you of God's faithfulness and love; let it encourage you to renew your prayers, to abound therein, to seek God more constantly, to depend more simply on his strength, to lay yourself out more entirely for him, and never to fear undertaking any thing in his cause. Let it excite you to abound in thanksgiving and praise, Ps. lxvi. 13, 20.

May what has been stated encourage you not only to hope, but patiently to wait for, and attentively observe God's answers to prayer. Keep from such sins as would provoke him to deny your requests, and go on striving and praying, asking, seeking and knocking, till you are at length safely landed on the heavenly shore; you will then find every prayer fully answered, every wish accomplished, and your souls *filled with all the fulness of God*.

REV. E. BICKERSTETH.

Prayer is not a special gift to privileged persons.

Who had instructed the poor woman of Canaan in prayer? A stranger, and a daughter of Tyre and Sidon, who was unacquainted with the wonders of the law and the oracles of the Prophets; who had not yet heard from the mouth of the Saviour the words of eternal life; who was still under the shadows of ignorance and of death: she prays, however; her love, her confidence, the desire of being granted, teach her to pray; her heart being touched, constitutes the whole sublimity of her prayer.

And surely, if, in order to pray, it were requisite to rise to those sublime states of prayer to which God exalteth some holy souls; if it were necessary to be wrapped in ecstasy, and transported even up to

heaven, like Paul, there to hear those ineffable secrets which God exposeth not to man, and which it is not permitted, even to man himself to reveal; or, like Moses upon the holy mountain, to be placed upon a cloud of glory, and, face to face, to see God; that is to say, if it were necessary to have attained to that degree of intimate union with the Lord, in which the soul, as if already freed from its body, springs up even into the bosom of its God; contemplates at leisure his infinite perfections; forgets, as I may say, its members which are still upon the earth; is no longer disturbed, nor even diverted by the phantoms of the senses; is fixed, and as if absorbed in the contemplation of the wonders and the grandeur of God; and already participating in his eternity, could count a whole age passed in that blessed state, as only a short and rapid moment; if, I say, it were necessary, in order to pray, to be favoured with these rare and excellent gifts of the Holy Spirit, you might tell us, like those new believers of whom St. Paul makes mention, that you have not yet received them, and that you know not what is even that Spirit which communicates them.

But prayer is not a special gift set apart for privileged souls alone; it is a common duty imposed on every believer; it is not solely a virtue of perfection, and reserved for certain purer and more holy souls; it is, like charity, an indispensable virtue, requisite to the perfect as to the imperfect, within the capacity of the illiterate equally as of the learned, commanded to the simple as to the most enlightened: it is the virtue of all men; it is the science of every believer; it is the perfection of every creature. Whoever has a heart, and is capable of loving the Author of his being,—whoever has a reason capable of knowing the nothingness of the creature, and the greatness of God, must know how to adore, to return him thanks, and to have recourse to him, to call upon him when turned away, to thank him when favourable, to humble himself when he strikes, to lay his wants before him, or to entreat his countenance and protection.

Thus, when the disciples ask of Jesus Christ to teach them to pray, he doth not unfold to them the height, the sublimity, the depth of the mysteries of God: he solely informs them, that, in order to pray, it is necessary to consider God as a tender, bountiful, and careful father; to ad-

dress themselves to him with a respectful familiarity, and with a confidence blended with fear and love; to speak to him the language of our weakness and of our wretchedness; to borrow no expressions but from our heart; to make no attempt of rising to him, but rather to draw him nearer to us: to lay our wants before him, and to implore his aid; to wish that all men bless and worship him; that his reign be established in all hearts; that his will be done, as in heaven, so in earth; that sinners return to the paths of righteousness; that believers attain to the knowledge of the truth; that he forgive us our sins; that he preserve us from temptation; that he assist our weakness; that he deliver us from our miseries. All is simple, but all is grand in this divine prayer; it recalls man to himself, and, in order to adopt it as a model, nothing more is required than to feel our wants, and to wish deliverance from them.

MASSILLON.

The greatest Sinners encouraged to Pray.

IN order to encourage the prayers of sinners, the Lord displays his glory from a throne of grace; here he waits to be gracious, and to dispense pardon and every blessing, to all who ask them with faith in Jesus Christ. Had he been revealed merely as seated on a throne of glory, sustaining the character of a righteous lawgiver and an impartial judge, a kind friend to the obedient, but a terrible avenger to the rebellious; it might well have been said, *Jehovah reigneth, let the people tremble*; but, as he hath made himself known on a mercy seat, as *God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*, it may be said, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice*. The whole plan of the Gospel, as it relates to the person, righteousness, atonement, and mediation of Emmanuel, is evidently intended to give encouragement to the trembling sinner to seek mercy from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The general invitations of the Gospel supersede the necessity of inquiring who may come in this new and living way: *Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him come*. The feast of divine love is provided; *all things are ready*; and the messengers of salvation are not only commanded to invite all whom they meet, but even to *compel them to come in*, by every argument, persuasion, expostulation, and encouragement, which

they can devise : for these are the means by which the Holy Spirit produces the willing mind, and gives the praying heart. The very appointment of this way of seeking salvation is a complete encouragement to all who feel desires after the blessings of the Gospel, and are willing to become humble supplicants for them : as it implies that the Lord purposes to bestow them as free gifts on indigent beggars ; and not on those who would buy, earn, or deserve them. For, in this case, prayer is the very language of poverty and distress, which guilt alone has brought on any part of the rational creation of God.

Every general command or exhortation, therefore, to pray, is an encouragement to all who desire to pray ; and whatever guilt they may have contracted, or in whatever depths of temptation and misery they may be plunged, it says to them, *Be of good comfort ; arise, he calleth thee.* Such general exhortations abound in Scripture : they are often addressed to the vilest transgressors, and are commonly connected with absolute promises : *Ask, and it shall be given ; for every one that asketh receiveth.* Such promises do not indeed engage that God will hear the prayers of the formal, the hypocritical, or the impenitent, who may (like the unclean spirit) pray very sincerely, *Torment me not,* and yet hate true religion as much as ever ; for *the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.* But, when the vilest transgressor is so far humbled and softened as to pray from his heart for mercy and grace, and all the blessings of salvation, as *the gift of God through Jesus Christ ;* he begins to offer *the prayer of the upright, in which the Lord delighteth.*

These assurances are confirmed by the examples of Scripture. When Manasseh, vile as he had been, began to humble himself and pray to the Lord, he was not upbraided with his abominable crimes, but mercifully accepted, pardoned, and delivered. When it could be said of persecuting Saul, *Behold he prayeth !* no further doubt remained of his acceptance and reconciliation. The publican, who loathed himself as much as the pharisee disdained him, and who, not daring to come near, or *to lift up his eyes unto heaven, smote upon his breast, and said, God be merciful to me, a sinner !* went down to his house justified rather than he who deemed it presumption in such a

wretch to pray. Even the short petition of the dying thief, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,* received an immediate answer full of astonishing grace. Nor is there one instance upon record of a prayer being rejected, except for the hypocrisy, wickedness, and unbelief with which it was presented. To all these encouragements we may add the frequent commendations bestowed on importunity, frequency, and fervency in prayer ; and the testimony of all the servants of God to his readiness to hear, and save them from the most tremendous depths into which their sins had cast them, whenever they were brought to cry unto him, and say, *O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul !*

REV. T. SCOTT.

A sense of Sin should incite to Prayer.

THOUGH we cannot pray with a too deep sense of sin, we may make our sins too exclusively the object of our prayers. While we keep, with a self-abasing eye, our own corruptions in view, let us look with equal intentness on that mercy, which cleanseth from all sin. Let our prayers be all humiliation, but let them not be all complaint. When men indulge no other thought but that they are rebels, the hopelessness of pardon hardens them into disloyalty. Let them look to the mercy of the king, as well as to the rebellion of the subject. If we contemplate his grace as displayed in the Gospel, then, though our humility will increase, our despair will vanish. Gratitude in this, as in human instances, will create affection. *We love him, because he first loved us.*

Let us therefore always keep our unworthiness in view as a reason why we stand in need of the mercy of God in Christ ; but never plead it as a reason why we should not draw nigh to him to implore that mercy. The best men are unworthy for their own sakes ; the worst on repentance will be accepted for his sake and through his merits.

In prayer, then, the perfections of God, and especially his mercies in our redemption, should occupy our thoughts as much as our sins ; our obligation to him as much as our departures from him. We should keep up in our hearts a constant sense of our own weakness, not with a design to discourage the mind and depress the spirits ; but with a view to drive us out of ourselves, in search of the Divine assistance. We

should contemplate our infirmity in order to draw us to look for his strength, and to seek that power from God which we vainly look for in ourselves: we do not tell a sick friend of his danger in order to grieve or terrify him, but to induce him to apply to his physician, and to have recourse to his remedy.

MRS. H. MORE.

Indisposedness to Prayer should incite to greater diligence in Prayer.

BUT thou wilt say, I find nothing but heavy indisposedness in it, nothing but roving and vanity of heart; and so, though I have used it some time, it is still unprofitable and uncomfortable to me.—Although it be so, yet, hold on, give it not over. Or need I say this to thee? Though it were referred to thyself, wouldst thou forsake it and leave off? Then, what wouldst thou do next? For if there be no comfort in it, far less is there any for thee in any other way. If temptation should so far prevail with thee as to lead thee to try intermission, either thou wouldst be forced to return to it presently, or certainly wouldst fall into a more grievous condition, and, after horrors and lashings, must at length come back to it again, or perish for ever. Therefore, however it go, continue praying. Strive to believe that love thou canst not see; for where sight is abridged, there it is proper for faith to work. If thou canst do no more, lie before thy Lord, and look to him, and say, Lord, here I am, thou mayest quicken and revive me if thou wilt, and I trust thou wilt; but if I must do it, I will die at thy feet. My life is in thy hand, and thou art goodness and mercy; while I have breath I will cry, or, if I cannot cry, yet I will wait on, and look to thee.

One thing forget not, that the ready way to rise out of this sad, yet safe state, is, to be much in viewing the Mediator, and interposing him betwixt the Father's view and thy soul. Some who do orthodoxly believe this to be right, yet, (as often befalls us in other things of this kind,) do not so consider and use it in their necessity, as becomes them, and therefore fall short of comfort. He hath declared it, *No man cometh to the Father but by me*. How vile soever thou art, put thyself under his robe, and into his hand, and he will lead thee unto the Father, and present thee acceptable and blameless; and the Father shall receive thee, and declare himself well

pleased with thee in his well-beloved Son, who hath covered thee with his righteousness, and brought thee so clothed, and set thee before him.

LEIGHTON.

None can complain of want of subjects for Prayer.

AN! my brethren, if we felt the wants of our soul as we feel those of our body,—if our eternal salvation interested us as much as a fortune of dirt, or a weak and perishable health, we would soon be skilful in the divine art of prayer; we would not complain that we had nothing to say in the presence of a God of whom we have so much to ask; the mind would be little difficulted in finding wherewith to entertain him; our evils alone would speak; in spite of ourselves, our heart would burst forth in holy effusions, like that of Samuel's mother before the ark of the Lord; we would no longer be master of our sorrows and tears; and the most certain mark of our want of faith, and that we know ourselves not, is, that of not knowing what to say to the Lord in the space of a short prayer.

And after all, is it possible that, in the miserable condition of this human life, surrounded as we are with so many dangers; made up ourselves of so many weaknesses; on the point, every moment, of being led astray by the objects of vanity, corrupted by the illusions of the senses, and dragged away by the force of example; a continual prey to the tyranny of our inclinations, to the dominion of our flesh, to the inconstancy of our heart, to the inequalities of our reason, to the caprices of our imagination, to the eternal variations of our temper; depressed by loss of favour, elated by prosperity, enervated by abundance, soured by poverty, led away by custom, shaken by accidents, flattered with praise, irritated by contempt; continually wavering between our passions and our duties, between ourselves and the law of God; is it possible, I say, that, in a situation so deplorable, we can be difficulted what to ask of the Lord, or what to say to him, when we appear in his presence? O my God! why then is man not less miserable? Or why is he not better acquainted with his wants?

Ah! if you told us that you know not where to begin in prayer; that your wants are so infinite, your miseries and your passions so multiplied, that, were

you to pretend to expose them all to the Lord, you would never have done : if you said to us, that the more you search into your heart, the more your wounds unfold, the more corruption and disorders do you discover in yourself, and that, despairing of being able to relate to the Lord the endless detail of your weaknesses, you present your heart wholly to him, you leave your evils to speak for you ; you ground your whole art of prayer on your confusion, your humiliation, and your silence ; and that, in consequence of having too much to say to him, you say nothing : if you spoke in this manner, you would speak the language of faith, and that of a penitent king, who, contemplating his repeated relapses, and no longer daring to speak to his God in prayer, said, *Lord, I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly ; I go mourning all the day long ; for mine iniquities are gone over my head ; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me ; for I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin. Forsake me not, O Lord ! O my God ! be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation !* Such is the silence of compunction which forms before God the true prayer.

But to complain that you have no longer any thing to say, when you wish to pray : alas ! my dear hearer, when you present yourself before God, do your past crimes hold out nothing for you to dread from his judgments, or to ask from his mercy ? What ! your whole life has perhaps been only a sink of debaucheries ; you have perverted every thing ; grace, your talents, your reason, your wealth, your dignities, all creatures ; you have passed the best part of your days in the neglect of your God, and in all the delusions of the world and of the passions ; you have vilified your heart by iniquitous attachments, defiled your body, disordered your imagination, weakened your lights, and even extinguished every happy disposition which nature had placed in your soul ; and the recollection of all this furnishes you with nothing in the presence of God ? And it inspires you with no idea of the method you ought to adopt, in having recourse to him, in order to obtain his forgiveness of such accumulated crimes ? And you have nothing to say to a God whom you have so long offended ? O man ! thy salvation, then, must either be without resource, or thou

must have other means of accomplishing it than those of the Divine clemency and mercy.

But, my dear hearer, I go farther. If you lead a Christian life ; if, returned from the world and from pleasures, you are at last entered into the ways of salvation, you are still more unjust in complaining that you find nothing to say to the Lord in your prayers. What ! the singular grace of having opened your eyes, of undeceiving you with regard to the world, and withdrawing you from the bottom of the abyss ; this blessing so rare, and denied to so many sinners, doth it give rise to no grateful feeling in your heart, when at his feet ? Can this recollection leave you cold and insensible ? Is nothing tender awakened by the presence of your Benefactor, you who pride yourself upon having never forgotten a benefit, and who so pompously display the feeling and the excess of your gratitude toward the creatures ?

Besides, if you feel those endless tendencies, which, in spite of your change of life, still rise up within you against the law of God ; that difficulty which you still have in doing well ; that unfortunate inclination which you still find within you toward evil ; those desires of a more perfect virtue, which always turn out vain ; those resolutions to which you are always faithless ; those opportunities in which you always find yourself the same ; those duties which always meet the same repugnance in your heart : in a word, if you feel that inexhaustible fund of weakness and of corruption which remains with you after your conversion, and which alarms so much your virtue, you will not only have ample matter to address the Lord in prayer, but your whole life will be one continual prayer. All the dangers which shall threaten your weakness, all the accidents which shall shake your faith, all the objects which shall open afresh the former wounds of your heart, all the inward emotions which shall prove that the man of sin lives always within you, will lead you to look upwards to him from whom alone you expect deliverance from them. As the Apostle said, every place will be to you a place of prayer ; every thing will direct your attention to God, because every thing will furnish you with Christian reflections upon yourself.

MASSILLON.

Prayer incompatible with a Worldly Spirit.

of them, and enrich your soul with them the more, the less you take in of the other.

LEIGHTON.

PRAYER winds up the soul from the earth, raises it above those things which intemperance feeds on, acquaints it with the transcending sweetness of divine comforts, the love and loveliness of Jesus Christ; and these most powerfully wean the soul from the low creeping pleasures that the world gapes after and swallows with such greediness. . . .

Prayer, being our near communion with the great God, certainly sublimates the soul, and makes it look down upon the base ways of the world with disdain, and despise the truly besotting pleasures of it. Yea, the Lord doth sometimes fill those souls that converse much with him with such beatific delights, such inebriating sweetness, as I may call it, that it is, in a happy manner, drunk with these; and the more there is of this, the more is the soul above base intemperance in the use of the delights of the world. Whereas common drunkenness makes a man less than a man, this makes him more than a man: that sinks him below himself, makes him a beast; this raises him above himself, and makes him an angel.

Would you, as surely you ought, have much faculty for prayer, and be frequent in it, and experience much of the pure sweetness of it? Then, deny yourselves more the muddy pleasures and sweetness of the world. If you would pray much, and with much advantage, then *be sober, and watch unto prayer*. Suffer not your hearts to long so after ease, and wealth, and esteem in the world: these will make your hearts, if they mix with them, become like them, and take their quality; will make them gross and earthly, and unable to mount up; will clog the wings of prayer, and you shall find the loss, when your soul is heavy and drowsy, and falls off from delighting in God and your communion with him. Will such things as those you follow be able to countervail your damage? Can they speak you peace, and uphold you in a day of darkness and distress? Or may it not be such now, as will make them all a burden and vexation to you? But, on the other hand, the more you abate and let go of these, and come empty and hungry to God in prayer, the more room shall you have for his consolations; and therefore, the more plentifully will he pour in

We cannot, in retiring into our closets, change our natures as we do our clothes. The disposition we carry thither will be likely to remain with us. We have no right to expect that a new temper will meet us at the door. We can only hope that the spirit we bring thither will be cherished and improved. It is not easy, rather it is not possible, to graft genuine devotion on a life of an opposite tendency; nor can we delight ourselves regularly for a few stated moments, in that God whom we have not been serving during the day. We may, indeed, to quiet our conscience, take up the employment of prayer, but cannot take up the state of mind which will make the employment beneficial to ourselves, or the prayer acceptable to God, if all the previous day we have been careless of ourselves, and unmindful of our Maker. *They* will not pray differently from the rest of the world, who do not live differently.

What a contradiction is it to lament the weakness, the misery, and the corruption of our nature, in our devotions, and then to rush into a life, though not perhaps of vice, yet of indulgence, calculated to increase that weakness, to inflame those corruptions, and to lead to that misery! There is either no meaning in our prayers, or no sense in our conduct. In the one we mock God, in the other we deceive ourselves.

Will not he who keeps up an habitual intercourse with his Maker, who is vigilant in thought, self-denying in action, who strives to keep his heart from wrong desires, his mind from vain imaginations, and his lips from idle words, bring a more prepared spirit, a more collected mind, be more engaged, more penetrated, more present to the occasion; will he not feel more delight in this devout exercise, reap more benefit from it, than he who lives at random, prays from custom, and who, though he dares not intermit the form, is a stranger to its spirit? . . .

Those who are so far conscientious as not to intermit a regular course of devotion, and who yet allow themselves at the same time to go on in a course of amusements which excite a directly opposite spirit, are inconceivably augmenting their own difficulties. They are eagerly heaping up fuel in the day, on the fire which they

intend to extinguish in the evening ; they are voluntarily adding to the temptations, against which they mean to request grace to struggle. To acknowledge at the same time, that we find it hard to serve God as we ought, and yet to be systematically indulging habits, which must naturally increase the difficulty, makes our character almost ridiculous, while it renders our duty almost impracticable. . . .

These habitual indulgences seem a contradiction to that obvious law, that one virtue always involves another ; for we cannot labour after any grace, that of prayer for instance, without resisting whatever is opposite to it. If then we lament, that it is so hard to serve God, let us not by our conduct furnish arguments against ourselves ; for, as if the difficulty were not great enough in itself, we are continually heaping up mountains in our way, by indulging in such pursuits and passions, as make a small labour an insurmountable one.

We may often judge better of our state by the result, than by the act of prayer ; our very defects, our coldness, deadness, wanderings, may leave more contrition on the soul than the happiest turn of thought. The feeling of our wants, the confession of our sins, the acknowledgment of our dependence, the renunciation of ourselves, the supplication for mercy, the application to *the fountain opened for sin*, the cordial entreaty for the aid of the Spirit, the relinquishment of our own will, resolutions of better obedience, petitions that these resolutions may be directed and sanctified, these are the subjects in which the suppliant should be engaged, by which his thoughts should be absorbed. Can they be so absorbed, if many of the intervening hours are passed in pursuits of a totally different complexion—pursuits which raise the passions which we are seeking to allay ? Will the cherished vanities go at our bidding ? Will the required dispositions come at our calling ? Do we find our tempers so obedient, our passions so obsequious in the other concerns of life ? If not, what reason have we to expect their obsequiousness in this grand concern ? We should therefore endeavour to believe as we pray, to think as we pray, to feel as we pray, and to act as we pray. Prayer must not be a solitary independent exercise ; but an exercise interwoven with

many, and inseparably connected with that golden chain of Christian duties, of which, when so connected, it forms one of the most important links.

Let us be careful that our cares, occupations, and amusements may be always such that we may not be afraid to implore the Divine blessing on them : this is the criterion of their safety and of our duty. Let us endeavour that in each, in all, one continually growing sentiment and feeling of loving, serving, and pleasing God, maintain its predominant station in the heart.

MRS. H. MORE.

Prayer must be offered in Faith.

Ask in faith. The Scriptures insist much on this ; James i. 6 ; Heb. x. 22 ; Matt. xxi. 22 ; Mark xi. 24. *All true prayer comes from faith*, Rom. x. 12, and is the voice and expression of faith. You need, in order to gain the true spirit of devotion, an unwavering belief *that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. xi. 6 ; that he is able to give us all we ask, and if it be for our real good, will do so. By faith realise his presence. Say with David, *He is about my path, and about my bed*. Fully believe that his almighty power can help and save even in the uttermost extremity, and that he is willing to hear you when you call upon him. It is, in short, a true faith that will make all the difference between a cold, heartless, unprofitable form, like praying (as one expressed it to me) to nothing but empty air, and the real desire of the believer, which, poured out unto God for things according to his will, is sure to succeed ; because Christ hath purchased every blessing, and intercedes for us ; it will make all the difference between a mere ceremony, and the soul-reviving and heart-cheering presence of God. To faith in the presence of God, join an undoubting confidence in the faithfulness of his promises. Vincent says, ' If we did but firmly believe that God, according to his covenant, for his Son's sake, has pardoned sin and will heal our souls of their distempers, an will give grace sufficient, and make us to grow and increase with the increase of God ; verily his promises would appear to be real, and according to our faith it would be to us.' This confidence is perfectly consistent with the deepest humility, and the most entire

distrust of ourselves. The larger our expectations are, the greater sense do we shew of the generosity and bounty of our unseen, but ever-present and ever-gracious Benefactor. 'We should endeavour,' says Watts, 'to impress our minds frequently with a fresh and lively belief of God's existence, though he be so much unknown; of his presence, though he be invisible; and of his just and merciful regard to all the actions of men.' Some have found it a means of strengthening their faith, to appeal, in the midst of their prayers, to the attributes of God, and to plead his promises, and the name of his Son.

'The spirit and life of prayer in faith,' says Traill, 'lies more in expectation than in asking.' Unwise Christians let out the vital spirits of prayer, when they let their expectations languish. When they set their face to pray, they make some conscience of searching out their wants; they labour to improve that sight to the raising of fervent desires of a supply of them: if they yet go higher to take in a sense of the fulness and freeness of that grace where their help is; yet, how rarely are they careful to raise up expectations of that helping grace! Few can say, *As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me*, Psalm lv. 16. Our way is, if we could see the glory, then we would believe; Christ's way is just the contrary: we must first believe, and then we shall see the *glory of God*, John xi. 40. 'It is the very nature of prayer in faith,' says Walker, 'to cast all manner of care and every burden on the Lord; guilt, corruption, trial, temptation, whatever it be, to come and lay it all upon Christ; and this, with a certain confidence in him, which both does him the highest honour, and makes him best pleased with us. It charges Christ with all, and leaves every thing with him. It says, Lord, here are all these sins that I have done; here are all these temptations I have to struggle with; here are all these corruptions to subdue; here is all this work to be performed; and I am a poor helpless thing: behold, I humbly lay it all upon thee, and leave it all and every part with thee. And I know that thou canst, and thou hast told me thou wilt take care of the whole. It is thy gracious office to do so, and thou delightest to do it. Lord, I cast all my care on thee. There is no other boldness in this than what the promises of God encourage

and give sanction to. Such is the very prayer of faith.

REV. E. BICKERSTETH.

Prayer only acceptable by Jesus Christ.

Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, Heb. xiii. 16. The children of God do delight in offering sacrifices to him; but if they might not know that they were well taken at their hands, this would discourage them much; therefore this is added. How often do the godly find it in their sweet experience, that when they come to pray, he welcomes them, and gives them such evidences of his love, as they would not exchange for all worldly pleasures! And when this doth not so presently appear at other times, yet they ought to believe it. He accepts themselves and their ways when offered in sincerity, though never so mean; though they sometimes have no more than a sigh or a groan, it is most properly a spiritual sacrifice.

Stay not away because thou, and the gifts thou offerest, are inferior to the offering of others. No, none are excluded for that; only give what thou hast, and act with affection, for that he regards most. Under the law, they who had not a lamb, were welcome with a pair of pigeons. So that the Christian may say; *What I am, Lord, I offer myself unto thee, to be wholly thine; and had I a thousand times more of outward or inward gifts, all should be thine; had I a greater estate, or wit, or learning, or power, I would endeavour to serve thee with all. What I have, I offer thee, and it is most truly thine; it is but of thy own that I give thee*. No one needs forbear sacrifice for poverty, for what God desires, is the heart, and there is none so poor, but hath a heart to give him.

But meanness is not all; there is a guiltiness on ourselves and on all we offer; our prayers and services are polluted. But this hinders not neither; for our acceptance is not for ourselves, but for the sake of one who hath no guiltiness at all: *acceptable by Jesus Christ*. In him, our persons are clothed with righteousness, and in his clothing, we are, as Isaac said of Jacob in his brother's garments, *as the smell of a field that the Lord hath blessed*, Gen. xxvii. 27. And all our other sacrifices, our prayers, and services, if we offer them by him, and put them into his hand, to offer to the Father, then doubt not, they

will be accepted in him; for this *by Jesus Christ*, is relative both to our offering and our acceptance. We ought not to offer any thing but *by him*, Heb. xiii. 15; and so, we are well-pleasing to the Father. For he is his well-beloved Son, in whom his soul is delighted; not only delighted and pleased with himself, but *in him*, with all things and persons that appear in him, and are presented by him.

And this alone answers all our doubts. For we ourselves, as little as we see that way, yet may see so much in our best services, so many wanderings in prayer, so much deadness, &c., as would make us still doubtful of acceptance; so that we might say with Job, *Although he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkened to me*; were it not for this, that our prayers and all our sacrifices pass through Christ's hand. He is that *angel that hath much sweet odours*, to mingle with *the prayers of the saints*, Rev. viii. 3, 4. He purifies them with his own merits and intercession, and so makes them pleasing unto the Father. How ought our hearts to be knit to him, by whom we are brought into favour with God, and kept in favour with him, in whom we obtain all the good we receive, and in whom all we offer is accepted! In him are all our supplies of grace, and our hopes of glory.

LEIGHTON.

We should seek great things in Prayer.

God delights to have his people beg great things of him, to implore the performance of *exceeding great and precious promises*; to pray for a share in the *unsearchable riches of Christ*; to know things which pass knowledge, and to be filled *with the fulness of God*; to ask *things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive*; to ask not as beggars only for alms, but as children for an inheritance; not to ask something, or a few things, but *in every thing to let our requests be made known unto God*: because, with Christ, he giveth us *freely all things*; even *all things richly to enjoy*, 1 Tim. vi. 17. God allows his children a spiritual and heavenly ambition to *covet earnestly the best gifts*; to aspire unto a kingdom; and accordingly to put up great and honourable requests unto him; to think what great things Christ hath purchased, what great things God hath pro-

mised and proposed to us; and to regulate our prayers more by the merits and riches of Christ, and by the greatness of God's mercies, than by those apprehensions which we cannot but have of our own unworthiness.

BP. REYNOLDS.

We find instances in the word (and the like the Lord can make again) of great confidence in some at their first coming to the throne of grace: as the blind man, Mark x. 46—52. He only heard of Christ's passing by: he stayed not for Christ's calling him, but *began to cry out, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me! When many charged him to hold his peace, he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!* 'Christ was never in my way before, and he shall not pass now without shewing mercy on me, if crying may prevail.' And that his crying was in faith, Christ witnesseth, ver. 52. In all appearance, the woman of Canaan was never at the throne of grace before, Matt. xv. 22—28, at least, never at Christ's feet before: yet she managed her first address with that confidence, that she not only got her desire, but that high commendation with it, *O woman, great is thy faith!* So the centurion, Matt. viii. 5—10. But above all instances, is that of the believing thief on the cross, Luke xxiii. 40—43. Never had the throne of grace so little to encourage an address to it, as when the King of grace was dying on the cross. Never had a sinner less encouragement to come to the throne of grace, than when the Saviour was nailed to one tree, and the sinner to another. Marvellous faith! a dying sinner, dying for his sins, employs a dying Saviour for salvation, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!* How little did Christ, nailed to, and dying on the cross, look like a King! How strong was the man's faith to believe, that Christ, through death, was going to his kingdom! and that Christ's gracious thought of him would save him! *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* As if our Lord had said, 'This is thy first and thy last address to me, verily it shall be heard.' Believers do not think how pleasing to the Lord, large and high thoughts of the sufficiency, fulness, and freedom of the grace that is in Jesus Christ, are. Believers should *devise liberal things, and by liberal things they shall stand*, Isa.

xxxii. 8. Let a believer ask, and think on the warrant of the promise, as much as he can; the Lord is *able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen!* Eph. iii. 20, 21.

REV. R. TRAILL.

If you feel disheartened and discouraged in prayer, and hesitate to ask largely at the throne of grace for spiritual blessings; if you have looked rather at your own unworthiness than at the fulness of the Divine benevolence, and have doubted the willingness of God to give to one so fallen and so unholy; be not henceforth deceived by so false a view of your case. It is not your riches, but your poverty that makes you the

fit object of Divine compassion. God does not require of you a moral qualification to ask mercy at his hands; but he looks to your want and helplessness as a sinner, and in the sovereignty of his grace he says, *Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find, &c.* Do not then suffer yourself to be kept back by a desponding contemplation of your unfitness to come to God; but come to him at once, as able and willing to save. Consider the depth of your necessities. Consider the infinite merits of Christ, which are given to you as your plea before God. Consider the gracious, the pressing invitation of your heavenly Father; consider the clear, specific, unfettered language of his promise; and never hesitate to ask, and to ask largely, while he is so willing to give.

REV. E. CRAIG.

SECTION XI.—ON CHRISTIAN DUTIES.

On Self-denial.

CHRIST hath said in plain terms, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself*; implying, that he that doth not deny himself cannot go after him.

But besides that, there is an impossibility in the thing itself, that any one should be a true Christian or go after Christ, and not deny himself, as may be easily perceived, if we will but consider what true Christianity requires of us, and what it is to be a real Christian. A true Christian, we know, is one that lives by faith and not by sight; that *looks not at the things which are seen, but at those things which are not seen*; that believes whatsoever Christ hath said, trusteth on whatsoever he hath promised, and obeyeth whatsoever he hath commanded; that receiveth Christ as his only Priest to make atonement for him, as his only Prophet to instruct, and as his only Lord and Master to rule and govern him. In a word, a Christian is one that gives up himself and all he hath to Christ, who gave himself and all he hath to him; and therefore the very notion of true Christianity implies and supposes the denial of ourselves, without which it is as impossible for a man to be a Christian, as it is for a subject to be rebellious and loyal to his prince at the same time; and therefore it is absolutely necessary that we go out of ourselves before we can go to him.

We must strip ourselves of our very selves before we can put on Christ; for Christ himself hath told us, that *no man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other*. We cannot serve both *God and Mammon*, Christ and ourselves too; so that we must either deny ourselves to go after Christ, or else deny Christ to go after ourselves, so as to mind our own selfish ends and designs in the world. . . .

And verily it is a hard case if we cannot deny ourselves for him, who so far denied himself for us, as to lay down his own life to redeem ours. He who was equal to God himself, yea, who himself was the true God, so far denied himself as to become man, yea, *a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs*, for us; and cannot we deny ourselves so much as a fancy, a conceit, a sin, or lust, for him? How then can we expect that he should own us for his friends, his servants, or disciples? No, he will never do it. Neither can we in reason expect that he should give himself and all the merits of his death and passion unto us, so long as we think much to give ourselves to him, or to deny ourselves for him. And therefore if we desire to be made partakers of all those glorious things that he hath purchased with his own most precious blood for the sons of men, let us begin here—indulge our flesh no longer,

but deny ourselves whatsoever God hath been pleased to forbid. And for this end, let us endeavour each day more and more to live above ourselves, above the temper of our bodies, and above the allurements of the world : live as those who believe and profess that they are none of their own, but Christ's—his by creation ; it was he that made us—his by preservation ; it is he that maintains us—and his by redemption ; it is he that hath purchased and redeemed us with his own blood. And therefore let us deny ourselves for the future to our very selves, whose we are not, and devote ourselves to him, whose alone we are. By this we shall manifest ourselves to be Christ's disciples indeed, especially if we do not only deny ourselves, but also take up our cross and follow him. . . .

There is still another thing behind wherein we must deny ourselves, if we desire to go after Christ ; and that is, we must deny and renounce all our self-righteousness, and all hopes and confidences from ourselves and from what we have done ; which I look upon as a very great piece of self-denial ; for naturally we are all prone to sacrifice to our own nets, to burn incense to our own drags, to boast of our own good works, and to pride ourselves with the conceit of our own righteousness. Though we be never so sinful, we would not be thought to be so, but would very fain be accounted righteous, not only by men, but by God himself, for something or other which ourselves do ; though, when all comes to all, we know not what that should be ; but howsoever, the pride of our hearts is such, that we are loth to go out of ourselves to look for righteousness, or to be beholden to another for it.

And this is the reason that justification by faith in Christ hath had so many adversaries in the world ; mankind in general being so much in love with themselves, and doting upon what themselves do, that they cannot endure to renounce and vilify their own obedience and good works, so much as to think that they stand in need of any other righteousness besides their own ; as if their own righteousness was so perfect, that God himself could find no fault with it, nor make any exceptions against it, but must needs acknowledge them to be just and righteous persons for it. Whereas, alas ! there is not the best action that ever a mere mortal did, but if examined by the strict rules of justice, it is far from being good ; yea, so far, that

God himself may justly pronounce it evil, and, by consequence, condemn the person that did it for doing of it. And therefore I cannot but wonder what it is that any man doth or can do, for which he can in reason expect to be justified before God ; our very righteousness being, as the prophet tells us, but as *filthy rags*, and our most holy performances fraught with sin and imperfection, and therefore so far from justifying us, that we may justly be condemned for them ; but this mankind doth not love to hear of, the pride of our hearts being such, that by all means we must have something in ourselves whereof to glory before God himself. But woe be to that person who hath no other righteousness but his own, wherein to appear before the Judge of the whole world ! for howsoever specious his actions may seem to men, they will be adjudged sins before the eternal God.

He therefore that would come to Christ, although he must labour after righteousness to the utmost of his power, yet when he hath done all, he must renounce it, and look upon himself as an unprofitable servant ; for Christ *came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance* ; that is, he came not to call such persons as think they have righteousness enough of their own to serve their turns, for such persons think they have no need of him, and therefore it would be in vain to call them ; but he calls sinners, that is, such as may perhaps be as righteous as the other ; but they do not think themselves to be so, but look upon themselves as undone for ever, unless they have something else to trust to than their own good works and obedience to the moral law. Such persons, therefore, Christ came to call ; and if they come to him, they cannot but find rest and righteousness in him. And if any of us desire to go after Christ so as to be his disciples, we must be sure to look upon ourselves as sinners, as deserving nothing but wrath and vengeance for whatsoever we have done. We must renounce all our own righteousness, and be so far from depending upon it, as to think that we have none to depend upon, for so really we have not. And when we have laid aside all thoughts of our own righteousness, as to the matter of our justification before God, then, and not till then, shall we be rightly qualified to embrace another's, even that righteousness which is by faith in Christ. Thus St. Paul, though he had as much, yea, more reason to trust in the flesh or in

himself than others, for himself saith that *touching the righteousness which is of the law*, he was blameless; yet, saith he, *What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him; not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 7—9. Thus therefore it is that all those must do, who desire to be, as St. Paul was, real disciples of Jesus Christ; as we must forsake our sins, so we must renounce our righteousness too. It is true, this is a great and difficult part of self-denial, thus to deny ourselves all that pride, pleasure, and confidence, which we used to take in the thoughts of our own righteousness and obedience to the law of God; but we must remember, that the first thing which our Saviour enjoins those that come after him, is to deny themselves.

BP. BEVERIDGE.

And yet let us be assured that, however times and seasons may change, the everlasting Gospel is still the same. God is always to be worshipped in spirit; for *God is a spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth*. All the laws of the Gospel are therefore spiritual, and are consequently unchangeable; for however customs, and manners, and circumstances may alter; however the way in which we are to carry our obedience into effect may be influenced by difference of situation, the fountain in the heart, from which all our actions are to proceed, must be the same; the obedience of the soul of man to his God must be the same. The disposition of the Christian is the same through all eternity: and the same spirit that led the martyrs to the stake is to conduct us through the struggles of sinful nature and the temptations of a guilty world.

Our Saviour foresaw that in prosperity we should be tempted to forget this, and for that very reason he seems to have added the word *daily*, in the passage before us; to remind us that it is not so much by separate acts, and mere outward sufferings, that he expected us to bear our cross, as by the constant disposition of our hearts

and the common tenor of our lives: and for the same reason he takes care to explain the expression, *bearing the cross*, not so much by enduring persecution, or being willing to give up our lives in his service, as by denying ourselves *daily*.

REV. C. WOLFE.

On Watchfulness.

THE night is passed, the day is at hand; we have slumbered enough in ignorance; it is now time we know the blessings which God hath bestowed upon us; it is time we should be thankful, and awake out of the sleep of forgetfulness, that we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and dream no more of our own strength. Our conscience is charged; we cannot plead ignorance; it is time that we rise; the mercy of God, the abundance of his blessing, the fear of his judgment, the regard of our salvation, so requireth.

Let us cast away the works of darkness, they be unfruitful, loathsome, and horrible; they darken the heart, and blind the conscience; he that doth them shall be cast into utter darkness. Let us be afraid, let us be ashamed hereof, such things are not fit for the children of light.

Let us put on the armour of light. God hath chosen us to be his soldiers, and hath called us forth into the field. Our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against the devil, the prince of this world, and the father of darkness: he rampeth like a lion, and lieth in wait, and seeketh whom he may devour. All the vanities of this life, our bodies, our own hearts, conspire against us; the fight is terrible, the danger is great. Let us not be unprovided; let us not stand open to the stroke of the enemy.

Let us take unto us the whole armour of God; let our loins be girded with verity; let us put on the shield of faith, the breastplate of righteousness, the sword of the Spirit, and the helmet of salvation. These be the weapons of righteousness, these be the armour of light. Let us not fear to declare the truth, though thereby we should endanger our life.

Let us be faithful unto the end; let it appear that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to cast down holds, and imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against God; so shall our armour be complete; so shall we shew glorious in the field, and be terrible to the enemy; so shall we stand strong and boldly against sword, and fire,

and death ; so shall we, like faithful soldiers of our captain Christ, manfully stand against the gates of hell, and resist all the assaults, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked ; then shall we eat of the fruit in the midst of paradise, and shall receive the crown of everlasting glory. **BP. JEWELL.**

Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. To pray not to be led into temptation, and then to rise from our knees and live negligently and without a holy vigilance, is to mock God. We solemnly bind ourselves by prayer to do all in our power to attain the blessings we supplicate. We must pray as if every thing depended, as it does, on God alone, and nothing was to be done by us ; and we must watch, as if all rested upon our diligence, and God without it would neither bring us help nor grant us the victory. God's grace enables his servants *to will and to do of his good pleasure* ; but he works in the use of means, by exciting our own activity and effort, and by quickening us to humility and watchfulness. *He that is born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*

Every Christian, then, must be vigilant. He must deal with his heart, as a man would act towards a servant who he was credibly informed was secretly unfaithful. He must watch as a sentinel on his post, who knows that dangers are near, and that if the soldier sleeps, the enemy may safely make his attack. He must therefore *walk circumspectly, keep under his body and bring it into subjection, and avoid even the appearance of evil.* He must be sober and *temperate in all things*, that his *moderation may appear unto all men.* He must fear even things which seem the most safe. He must take the alarm the first moment he perceives any approbation of sin stealing upon his mind. He must not in the smallest thing *give place to the devil*, but *resist him manfully, steadfast in the faith.*

REV. D. WILSON.

Watchfulness and prayer form the Christian's intrenchment. These are the lines our enemy cannot break. Be the person who uses them ever so weak, he will be sure to stand ; be the person who neglects them ever so strong in himself, ever so judiciously taught, or ever so extensive in his knowledge, he is liable to fall.

MR. WINTER.

On true Mortification.

LET thy conscience against sin be what it will or can, yet, if it be not joined with a sincere endeavour after a universal obedience unto God in the performance of duties, it is not, neither can it be, true mortification.

This is that in which many deceive themselves. They find a perplexing lust within that troubles their conscience and disturbs their peace. The exceeding guilt of it fills them with bitterness, dread, and horror ; and still it will be thus with them till they have beaten it down and subdued it. They vow, and pray, and watch, and strive against it : they cut off all occasions that should draw it forth ; all provisions that should relieve and support it, and do whatsoever may be done towards the killing of it. Yea, but all this while they are negligent and careless in other duties, which are not of so immediate concernment to that particular lust. They do not strive to follow God in all his ways : if they think one duty will do it, they neglect all the rest. Let not such men think that they do indeed mortify any one corruption.

It is an ill sign, that that heart is very much unmortified where a temptation or corruption can break through all Gospel considerations used against it, and is stopped from breaking into act only by legal arguments. When a temptation to sin assaults thee, thou runnest, it may be, to the love of God, to the death of Christ, to the ugly nature of sin, to the beautiful nature of holiness, to beat it down by these (the best and most effectual) considerations : if these do not prevail, but the lust and temptation still tumultuates, and is ready just to break forth into act, thy heart is all on a flame with it ; and then, possibly, a thought of hell, of vengeance, of everlasting wrath, starts up suddenly and quashes and quenches this temptation, as water cast on a fire. If this be usual with you, your hearts are much unmortified, and your affections strongly engaged unto sin.

Heart sins lie, as so many worms, beating and gnawing the very root of grace ; when as outward sins, any otherwise than as they proceed from the heart, are but as caterpillars, that devour only the verdure and flourishing of grace. How can grace breathe or stir, in such a crowd of sinful thoughts and sinful affections that oppress it ? How can it grow and thrive among

such multitudes of weeds, that choke and starve it? There is no room for grace to live, at least not to act, till mortification pulls up and throws out of the heart all that trash which before filled it.

If I may be allowed so to express it, the very heart of sin lies in the sins of the heart; and if we would indeed mortify it, it is there that we must both aim and strike.

Could we see impenitency, unbelief, hardness of heart, with the same eyes that God sees them, they would appear more ugly and deformed than those foul and notorious wickednesses, which cause an indelible shame and reproach upon the places where such live as are guilty of them. And that, because they deface the choicest part of the image of God; that, wherein the soul doth nearest resemble and transcribe its original. This, a gracious heart, in part, discovers: it sees somewhat of the loathsome nature of these spiritual sins, which before it did not, and therefore now so earnestly opposeth them.

If any, who hath been a sinner, though to a very high degree of scandal, doth eternally perish, it is not because of these outward sins merely, but because of impenitency, of unbelief, of hardness of heart, of slighting and undervaluing Jesus Christ, and refusing the gracious terms of the Gospel. They are only these spiritual sins that do shut men out of heaven, and shut them up in hell, and seal them unto everlasting condemnation. Gross sins do this meritoriously, but these alone do it eventually; these do certainly effect it, as being sins against the only remedy appointed.

Did you ever see, did you ever strive against the pride, the hypocrisy, the unbelief and hardness of your hearts? Do you know what it is to maintain a war against these spiritual sins? Can you abhor and resist a temptation to slight Christ, or to grieve his Spirit, as well as to any outward scandalous sin? If so, this is a good sign that you do indeed rightly exercise mortification. But, if you are only cleansed from the pollutions of the flesh, and not also from the pollutions of the spirit; if, while you war and strive against fleshly lusts, these spiritual and Gospel sins are harboured in your hearts, know, assuredly, that whatsoever seeming victories and conquests you may obtain over them, yet they are not mortified.

BP. HOPKINS.

Necessity of Godly fear.

It were superfluous to insist on the defining of this passion of fear, and the manifold distinctions of it, either with philosophers or divines. The fear here recommended, 1 Pet. i. 17, is, out of question, a holy suspicion and fear of offending God, which may not only consist with assured hope of salvation, and with faith, and love, and spiritual joy, but is their inseparable companion; as all divine graces are linked together, (as the heathens said of their three graces,) and, as they dwell together, they grow or decrease together. The more a Christian believes, and loves, and rejoices in the love of God, the more unwilling surely he is to displease him, and if in danger of displeasing him, the more afraid of it; and, on the other side, this fear being the true principle of a wary and holy conversation, fleeing sin, and the occasions of sin, and temptations to it, and resisting them when they make an assault, is as a watch or guard that keeps out the enemies and disturbers of the soul, and so preserves its inward peace, keeps the assurance of faith and hope unmolested, and that joy which they cause, and the intercourse and societies of love betwixt the soul and her beloved, uninterrupted; all which are most in danger when this fear abates and falls to slumbering; for then, some notable sin or other is ready to break in and put all into disorder, and for a time makes those graces, and the comfort of them to present feeling, as much to seek as if they were not there at all.

No wonder, then, that the Apostle, having stirred up his Christian brethren, whatsoever be their estate in the world, to seek to be rich in those jewels of faith, and hope, and love, and spiritual joy, and then, considering that they travel amongst a world of thieves and robbers,—no wonder, I say, that he adds this, advises them to give those their jewels in custody, under God, to this trusty and watchful grace of godly fear; and having earnestly exhorted them to holiness, he is very fitly particular in this fear, which makes up so great a part of that holiness, that it is often in Scripture named for it all.

Solomon calls it the *beginning* or the *top of wisdom*, Prov. xv. 33: the word signifies both, and it is both. The beginning of it, is the beginning of wisdom, and the progress and increase of it, is the in-

crease of wisdom. That hardy rashness which many account valour, is the companion of ignorance; and of all rashness, boldness to sin is the most witless and foolish. There is in this, as in all fear, an apprehension of an evil whereof we are in danger. The evil is sin, and the displeasure of God and punishment following upon sin. The godly man judgeth wisely, as the truth is, that sin is the greatest of evils, and the cause of all other evils; it is a transgression of the just law of God, and so a provocation of his just anger, and the cause of those punishments, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, which he inflicts. And then, considering how mighty he is to punish, considering both the power and the reach of his hand, that it is both most heavy and unavoidable; all these things may and should concur to the working of this fear.

There is, no doubt, a great difference betwixt those two kinds of fear that are usually differenced by the names of *servile* and *filial* fear; but certainly, the most genuine fear of the sons of God, who call him Father, doth not exclude the consideration of his justice and of the punishment of sin which his justice inflicts. We see here, it is used as the great motive of this fear, that he *judgeth every man according to his works*. And David in that Psalm wherein he so much breathes forth those other sweet affections of love, and hope, and delight in God and in his word, yet expresseth this fear even of the justice of God: *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments*, Psal. cxix. 120. The flesh is to be awed by Divine judgments, though the higher and surer part of the soul is strongly and freely tied with the cords of love. Temporal corrections, indeed, they fear not so much in themselves, as that impression of wrath that may be upon them for their sins, Psal. vi. 1. That is the main matter of their fear, because their happiness is in his love, and the light of his countenance, that is their life. They regard not how the world looks upon them; they care not who frown, so he smile on them; because no other enemy nor evil in the world can deprive them of this, but their own sin, therefore that is what they fear most.

As the evil is great, so the Christian hath great reason to fear in regard of his danger of it, considering the multitude, strength, and craft of his enemies, and his own

weakness and unskilfulness to resist them. And his sad experience in being often foiled, teacheth him that it is thus; he cannot be ignorant of it; he finds how often his own resolutions and purposes deceive him. Certainly, a godly man is sometimes driven to wonder at his own frailty and inconstancy. What strange differences will be betwixt him and himself; how high and how delightful at some times are his thoughts of God and the glory of the life to come; and yet, how easily at another time base temptations will bemire him, or, at the least molest and vex him! And this keeps him in a continual fear, and that fear in continual vigilancy and circumspectness. When he looks up to God, and considers the truth of his promises, and the sufficiency of his grace and protection, and the almighty strength of his Redeemer, these things fill his soul with confidence and assurance; but when he turns his eye downward again upon himself, and finds so much remaining corruption within, and so many temptations, and dangers, and adversaries without, this forces him not only to fear, but to despair of himself; and it should do so, that his trust in God may be the purer and more entire. That confidence in God will not make him secure and presumptuous in himself, nor that fear of himself make him diffident of God. This fear is not opposite to faith, but high-mindedness and presumption are. See Rom. xi. 20. To a natural man, it would seem an odd kind of reasoning that of the Apostle, Phil. ii. 12, 13, *It is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure*: therefore, (would he think) you may save labour, you may sit still, and not work, or, if you work, you may work fearlessly, being so sure of his help: but the Apostle is of another mind; his inference is, Therefore, *work out your own salvation*, and work it *with fear and trembling*.

But he that hath assurance of salvation, why should he fear? If there is truth in his assurance, nothing can disappoint him, not sin itself. It is true; but it is no less true, that if he do not fear to sin, there is no truth in his assurance: it is not the assurance of faith, but the mispersuasion of a secure and profane mind. Suppose it so, that the sins of a godly man cannot be such as to cut him short of that salvation whereof he is assured; yet they may be such as for a time will deprive him of that

assurance, and not only remove the comfort he hath in that, but let in horrors and anguish of conscience in its stead. Though a believer is freed from hell, (and we may overstrain this assurance, in our doctrine, beyond what the soberest and devoutest men in the world can ever find in themselves, though they will not trouble themselves to contest and dispute with them that say they have it,) so that his soul cannot come there: yet some sins may bring as it were a hell into his soul for a time, and this is reason enough for any Christian in his right wits to be afraid of sin. No man would willingly hazard himself upon a fall that may break his leg, or some other bone; though he could be made sure that he should not break his neck, or that his life were not at all in danger, and that he should be perfectly cured, yet the pain and trouble of such a hurt would terrify him, and make him wary and fearful when he walks in danger. The broken bones that David complains of after his fall, may work fear and wariness in those that hear him, though they were ascertained of a like recovery.

This fear is not cowardice; it doth not debase, but elevates the mind; for it drowns all lower fears, and begets true fortitude and courage to encounter all dangers, for the sake of a good conscience and the obeying of God. *The righteous is bold as a lion*, Prov. xxviii. 1. He dares do any thing but offend God; and to dare to do that, is the greatest folly, and weakness, and baseness in the world. From this fear have sprung all the generous resolutions, and patient sufferings of the saints and martyrs of God: because they durst not sin against him, therefore they durst be imprisoned, and impoverished, and tortured, and die for him. Thus the prophet sets carnal and godly fear as opposite, and the one expelling the other, Isa. viii. 12, 13. And our Saviour, Luke xii. 4, 5. *Fear not them that kill the body: but fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him*. Fear not, but fear; and therefore fear, that you may not fear. This fear is like the trembling that hath been observed in some of great courage before battles. Moses was bold and fearless in dealing with a proud and wicked king; but when God appeared, he said, (as the Apostle informs us,) *I exceedingly fear and quake*, Heb. xii. 21.

LEIGHTON.

On Christian Submission and Contentment.

BUT patience, contentment, and acquiescence in the will of God respecting us, constitute so important a part of the Christian temper, that they require a more particular consideration; and when genuine, they are so invariably connected with submission to God in all other respects, that, wherever any appearances of them are found wholly separated from it, we may be sure they are mere counterfeits, the result of natural insensibility, affected apathy, thoughtless indolence, or presumptuous obduracy. Evangelical principles, by inculcating the doctrine of our entire unworthiness, effectually induce the conviction that we all enjoy more than we deserve, and suffer less than is due to our sins; so that, as far as we are influenced by them, they must silence our rebellious murmurs and repinings against God. They lead us likewise so entirely to trace every event to his appointment, as the first cause of all our trials, that thus they tend directly to counteract our propensity to *despise* his chastenings, or to vent our uneasiness under trouble by expressions of anger against instruments and second causes. They likewise give us such ground for confidence in the mercy, truth, power, and love of God, and for the animating hope of future happiness, as suffices to support the soul, and to preserve us from *fainting* or desponding under divine rebukes; whilst the persuasion that infinite wisdom and everlasting love have chosen, and will over-rule, every event for our more important good, is suited to produce a rational, reflecting, and abiding acquiescence in the will of our heavenly Father. The Lord has many wise and kind reasons for allotting to his people such things as they would never have chosen for themselves; and, if they knew the whole intent of his most painful dispensations, they would certainly approve of them; for every affliction is medicinal, and conducive to sanctification. Thus the Christian's principles lead him to consider his station, abode, employment, provision, trials, losses, disappointments, and vexations, as *the will of God concerning him*; and this induces him to acquiesce in them. He learns, in the school of Christ, *in whatever state he is, therewith to be content*; and, as far as he acts consistently with his judgment, he views every dispensation in a favourable

light, and realises the paradox, *sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*. He seeks comfort from God, when other comforts are withdrawn; and he is taught to wait his time for deliverance, by *patient continuance in well-doing*; without using any sinful expedients, or deserting his path or his work to escape the cross. He looks for trouble as long as he continues on earth: he esteems sin to be a greater evil than affliction; and, in the character, sufferings, patience and glory of his divine Saviour, he finds every instruction explained, and every argument enforced, by which resignation, confidence in God, and joy in tribulations are inculcated. Indeed in this, as in all other respects, the believer is conscious that he comes far short of his perfect rule and example: and this covers him with shame, and excites his earnest prayers for mercy and grace; but his views tend to render him cheerful at all times, and in all circumstances, as they give the fullest assurance that every event will conduce to the final and eternal good of all who love God. So that all the discouragement, despondency, and disquietude of religious persons spring from other causes, and are directly contrary to their principles. A humble confidence in God, in respect of the future, is also of great importance: but it may be particularly considered as one of the believer's privileges, and need not further be discussed in this place; for, indeed, our duties and our privileges are seldom more distinct, than the same object viewed in different lights, or the same idea expressed by different terms.

REV. T. SCOTT.

Whatever I can desire or conceive as essential to my peace, cannot be the production of this world, and in this world I seek not for it. If all the good of the present life were within my reach, and I had both liberty and capacity for its enjoyment, I know that it is not only changeable and evanescent, but is bounded by the grave. Thy full consolation and perfect delight, therefore, O my soul, are to be found only in God, the comfort of the poor, and the exaltation of the humble. Wait a little while, wait with patience and resignation, for the accomplishment of the divine promise, which cannot fail, and thou shalt enjoy the plenitude of good in heaven. By the pursuit of earthly and finite good, thou lovest that which is cele-

tial and infinite: use this world, therefore, as *a pilgrim and a stranger*, and make only the next the object of desire.

It is impossible thou shouldst be satisfied with temporal good, because thou wert not formed for the enjoyment of it; and though all that the creatures comprehend were in thy possession, thou wouldest still be unblest; for it is in the Creator, the supreme God alone, that all blessedness consists: not such as is extolled and sought after by the foolish lovers of the world; but such as the faithful Christian admires and sighs for; such as the spiritual and pure in heart, whose *conversation is in heaven*, have sometimes a foretaste of.

How vain and transient is all human comfort! how substantial and permanent that which is derived from the Spirit of Truth living and ruling in the soul! The regenerate man continually turneth to Jesus, the comforter within him, and saith, 'Be present with me, Lord Jesus, in all places, and at all times! May I find consolation, in being willing to bear the want of all human comfort! and if thy consolation also be withdrawn, let thy will and righteous probation of me be to me as the highest comfort; for thou *wilt not always chide, neither wilt thou keep thine anger for ever*!' . . .

Bring my will, O Lord, into true and unalterable subjection to thine, and do with me what thou plearest; for whatever is done by thee cannot but be good. If thou pourest thy light upon me, and turnest my night into day, blessed be thy name; and if thou leavest me in darkness, blessed also be thy name! If thou exaltest me with the consolations of thy Spirit, or humblest me under the afflictions of fallen nature, still may thy holy name be for ever blessed!

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

Christians are too little aware what their religion requires from them, with regard to their wishes. When we wish things to be otherwise than they are, we lose sight of the great practical parts of the life of godliness. We wish, and wish;—when, if we have done all that lies on us, we should fall quietly into the hands of God. Such wishing cuts the very sinews of our privileges and consolations. You are leaving me for a time; and you say you wish you could leave me better, or leave me with some assistance: but, if it is

right for you to go, it is right for me to meet what lies on me, without a wish that I had less to meet, or were better able to meet it.

I could write down twenty cases wherein I wished God had done otherwise than he did; but which I now see, had I had my own will, would have led to extensive mischief. The life of a Christian is a life of paradoxes. He must lay hold on God: he must follow hard after him: he must determine not to let him go. And yet he must learn to let God alone. Quietness before God is one of the most difficult of all Christian graces;—to sit where he places it; to be what he would have us to be, and this as long as he pleases.

REV. R. CECIL.

On Implicitness.

God has marked Implicitness and Simplicity of faith with peculiar approbation. He has done this throughout the Scripture; and he is doing it daily in the Christian life. An unsuspecting, unquestioning, unhesitating spirit he delights to honour. He does not delight in a credulous, weak, and unstable mind. He gives us full evidence, when he calls and leads; but he expects to find in us, what he himself bestows,—an open ear, and a disposed heart. Though he gives us not the evidence of sense; yet he gives such evidence as will be heard by an open ear, and followed by a disposed heart:—*Thomas! because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* We are witnesses what an open ear and a disposed heart will do in men of the world. If wealth is in pursuit—if a place presents itself before them—if, their persons, and families, and affairs, are the object—a whisper, a hint, a probability, a mere chance, is a sufficient ground of action. It is this very state of mind with regard to religion, which God delights in, and honours. He seems to put forth his hand, and to say,—‘Put thy hand into mine; follow all my leadings; keep thyself attentive to every turn.’

REV. R. CECIL.

Patience commended by God's example.

LONG-SUFFERING is God's darling attribute; and what is dear in his sight, ought not to be less precious in ours. And how marvellous is his patience, who daily pours his blessings on those men, who as daily

offend, affront, and dishonour him; making his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, sending rain on the unjust as well as the just, and not excluding the worst of us from those blessings, to the least of which the best of us have no title! For the benefit of the guilty as well as the innocent, of the impious as well as the pious, of the ungrateful as well as the grateful, the seasons take their rounds, the elements work together, the light and air exert their kindly influences, the fountains send forth their salutary streams, the corn fields grow yellow, the grapes ripen on the vines, the boughs of the fruit-trees bend down, the groves are clothed, and the pastures flourish. The Gospel is still preached to those who slight it; salvation is still held forth to those who have so often dashed it from them; Christ is still offered to those who have blasphemed him. And although God be provoked every day, yet he holds his hand, and waits patiently, till the last minute of man's trial and the world's duration be past. Although he have the power in his own hands, and the weapons of his indignation are all ready, he defers to strike, if perhaps men may at length be led by his long-suffering to repentance; because he wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted, and live; and while judgment sleeps, mercy calls night and day to sinners, *Why will ye die? Repent, and ye shall be forgiven; turn ye, and ye shall live.* Yet God's blessings are abused to the purposes of luxury and lasciviousness: his truth is denied; his commandments are broken; his church is persecuted; his ministers are insulted; his Son is crucified afresh; and his own long-suffering is made an argument against his existence—And he is still patient. What is man, then, that he should complain?

The patience which we so much admire in God, shone forth yet more amazingly in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. For was ever patience like that patience, which, descending from a throne of glory, bore a long imprisonment in the womb, to sanctify sinners; and lay in a stable, to bring them to a kingdom? Behold the Master baptised by the servant, and he who alone could give remission of sins, submitting to be washed in the laver of regeneration. He fasts forty days, who filleth all things living with plenteousness, and who is himself the bread of life. He endures the

temptation of Satan, and answers them one by one from the Scriptures, who could have remanded him to his chains in a moment by the word of his power. With his disciples he lived, not as their Lord, but the servant of all. How tenderly did he bear with all their ignorances and infirmities, leading them on gently, as they were able to follow him! And that they might never refuse to do offices of kindness for each other, he washed all their feet, and, amongst them, those of Judas, from whom he meekly received the kiss that betrayed him. How patiently did he endure the contradiction of sinners; and, in his disputes with the Jews, how lovingly did he try to persuade the incredulous, and to melt by kindness the hearts that were hardened! How quietly did he submit to the insolence of the proud, and give place to the fury of the wrathful, desirous, even to his last hour, to save, if possible, those murderers of the prophets, those rebels against their God! But when the time of his passion came, what railing and revilings were patiently heard by him, what mockery and insult he patiently suffered! How was he wounded, who heals every disease? How was he crowned with thorns, who crowns his martyrs with unfading garlands? How was he stripped naked, who clothes the field with flowers, and all the world with robes, and the whole globe with the canopy of heaven, and the dead with immortality? How was he fed with gall and vinegar, who reaches out to his people the fruits of paradise, and the cup of salvation? Innocent and righteous, nay, innocence and righteousness itself, he was numbered with the transgressors. The truth was oppressed by false witnesses; he was judged who was to judge the world; the Word of God became dumb as a lamb before his shearers. And when, at the crucifixion, the heavens were confounded, and the earth trembled, and the sun, that he might not be forced to behold the villany of the Jews, withdrew his shining, and left the world in darkness; still the blessed Jesus said nothing, and betrayed no emotion of anger, but endured without murmuring all that earth and hell could lay upon him, till he had put the last stroke to this most finished picture of perfect patience, and prayed for his murderers; whom he has been ever since, and is now, ready to receive, upon their repentance, not only to pardon, but

to a participation of the glories of his kingdom.
BP. HORNE.

On Christian Benevolence.

THAT all true saints are of a loving, benevolent, and beneficent temper, the Scripture is very plain and abundant. Without it, the Apostle tells us, though *we should speak with the tongues of men and angels, we are as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*; and that though we have *the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge*, yet without this spirit *we are nothing*. And there is no one virtue or disposition of the mind that is so often, and so expressly insisted on, in the marks that are laid down in the New Testament, whereby to know true Christians. It is often given as a sign that is peculiarly distinguishing, by which all may know Christ's disciples, and by which they may know themselves; and is often laid down, both as a negative and positive evidence. Christ calls the law of love, by way of eminency, his *commandment*, John xiii. 34: *A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*. And chap. xv. 12: *This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you*. And ver. 17: *These things I command you, that ye love one another*. And says, chap. xiii. 35: *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*. And chap. xiv. 21, (still with a special reference to this which he calls his *commandment*): *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me*. The beloved disciple, who had so much of this sweet temper himself, abundantly insists on it, in his epistles. There is none of the Apostles is so much in laying down express signs of grace, for professors to try themselves by, as he; and in his signs, he insists scarcely on any thing else, but a spirit of Christian love, and an agreeable practice: 1 John ii. 9, 10; *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him*. Chap. iii. 14: *We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death*. Ver. 18, 19: *My little children, let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know*

that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. Ver. 23, 24: This is his commandment, that we should love one another. And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. Chap. iv. 7, 8: Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love. Ver. 12, 13: No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit. Ver. 16: God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Ver. 20: If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

And the Scripture is as plain as it is possible it should be, that none are true saints, but those whose true character it is, that they are of a disposition to pity and relieve their fellow-creatures, that are poor, indigent, and afflicted;—Ps. xxxvii. 21: *The righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. Ver. 26: He is ever merciful and lendeth. Ps. cxii. 5: A good man sheweth favour and lendeth. Ver. 9: He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor. Prov. xiv. 31: He that honoureth God, hath mercy on the poor. Prov. xxi. 26: The righteous giveth and spareth not. Jer. xxii. 16: He judgeth the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the Lord. James i. 27: Pure religion and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, &c. Hos. vi. 6: For I have desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings. Matt. v. 7: Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. 2 Cor. viii. 8: I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. James ii. 13, 16: For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace,*

*be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? 1 John iii. 17: Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Christ, in that description he gives of the day of judgment, Matt. xxv. (which is the most particular that we have in all the Bible,) represents that judgment will be passed that day, according as men have been found to have been of a merciful spirit and practice, or otherwise. Christ's design in giving such a description of the process of that day, is plainly to possess all his followers with that apprehension, that unless this was their spirit and practice, there was no hope of their being accepted and owned by him at that day. Therefore this is an apprehension that we ought to be possessed with. We find in Scripture, that a righteous man and a merciful man are synonymous expressions. Isa. lvii. 1: *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.**

Thus we see how full, clear, and abundant the evidence from Scripture is, that those who are truly gracious, are under the government of that lamb-like, dove-like Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that this is essentially and eminently the nature of the saving grace of the Gospel, and the proper spirit of true Christianity. We may therefore undoubtedly determine, that all truly Christian affections are attended with such a spirit, and that this is the natural tendency of the fear and hope, the sorrow and the joy, the confidence and the zeal of true Christians.

PRES. EDWARDS.

Our great need of Sober-mindedness.

CHRYSOSTOM says, 'Sober-mindedness is the same with lowly-mindedness.' And Theodoret makes it the same with that poverty of spirit, on which Christ pronounces his first blessing. It is recommended to the younger to be *clothed with humility*, that is, to be sober-minded.

It is an observation that I have made upon the little acquaintance I have had with the world, that I have seen more young people ruined by pride, than perhaps by any one lust whatsoever; and

therefore let me press this upon you with all earnestness; and it is a caution introduced with more than ordinary solemnity, *I say, through the grace given unto me, unto every man that is among you*; and what is the word that is thus declared to be of divine original, and universal concern? It is this—that *no man think of himself above what he ought to think, but think soberly*.

Keep up low thoughts of yourselves, of your endowments both outward and inward, of your attainments, and improvements, and all your performances, and all the things you call merits and excellencies. Boast not of a false gift, of what you have not; nor be puffed up with what you have. What there is in you that is commendable, wink at it yourselves, as most people do at their own faults, and diminish it; and look much at that in others which is more commendable. . . .

Keep up a quick and constant sense of your own manifold defects and infirmities—how much there is in you, and how much is said and done by you every day, which you have reason to be ashamed of, and humbled for—in how many things you come short of others, and in how many more you come short of the rule of duty: you will find no reason to be proud of what you know, when you see how much you are ignorant of, nor of what you do that is good, when you see how much you do amiss. Dwell much upon humbling considerations, and those that tend to take down your high opinion of yourselves; and keep up a humble sense of your necessary and constant dependence upon Christ and his grace, without which you are nothing, and will soon be worse than nothing. . . .

You are setting out in a world of sorrows and snares, of troubles and temptations, and therefore are concerned to be sober-minded, that you may be armed accordingly, so that the troubles of the world may not rob you of your peace, nor the temptations of it rob you of your purity.—Your way lies through a wilderness, a land of darkness and drought, and nothing but sober-mindedness will carry you safe through it to Canaan.

Now you are young and have the world before you, you are apt to flatter yourselves with a conceit that every thing will be safe and pleasant; your mountain you think stands so strong, that it cannot be moved;

that nothing can shake either your integrity, or your prosperity; but you little know what this world is, and what snares there are in every condition of life and every company, in all employments, in all enjoyments. And if you be careless, and vain, and live at large, you make yourselves an easy prey to the tempter, and are in danger of being carried away by the course of this world. You have need therefore to take heed to yourselves, and to keep your souls diligently, that is, to be sober-minded; for, considering the corruption that is in the world through lust, and the corruption that is in your own hearts, what may we not fear when they come together? . . .

You know not what trials and troubles you may be reserved for, but you know that *man who is born of a woman, is but of few days, and full of trouble*; his crosses, certain, more or less; a cross to be taken up daily; his comforts uncertain: and should not this make you sober, that when afflictions come, they may not be so terrible as they are to those who, by indulging themselves in mirth and pleasure, have made themselves like *the tender and delicate woman, that would not set so much as the sole of her foot to the ground, for tenderness and delicacy*? Even the common calamities of human life press hard upon such, and wound deep; whereas those who live a sober, serious, self-denying life, are, like Christ, acquainted with grief, have made it familiar to them, and can the easier reconcile themselves to it. . . .

You are here in this world upon your trial for heaven. O that you would firmly believe this—not only that you are hastening apace into eternity, but, that it will certainly be to you a comfortable or a miserable eternity, according to what you are and do while you are in the body! This consideration, one would think, should make you sober. . . .

Eternal life is set before you, eternal happiness in the vision and fruition of God; you may make it sure, if it be not your own fault, may lay hold on it. There are substantial honours, satisfying pleasures, and true riches, in comparison with which all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world are empty names, and shadows. These may be your portion for ever; they shall be so, if by a patient continuance in well-doing through Christ you

seek for this glory, honour, and immortality. You are here probationers for the best preferment, for a place in the New Jerusalem; you stand candidates for a crown, a kingdom incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; you stand fair for it: and is it not time to think then? to think seriously? and soberly to apply yourselves to that business for which you were sent into this world, and from which, if it be done faithfully, you may remove with comfort to another world? You ought to be serious and circumspect now, because as you spend your time, so you are likely to spend your eternity. A great deal of work you have to do, and but little time to do it in. . . .

But above all, you must shortly go to judgment. With the consideration of this, Solomon endeavours to make his young man sober, who is for walking in the way of his heart and in the sight of his eyes,—*Know thou that for all these things God shall bring thee into judgment.* And thou who makest a jest of every thing, shalt not be able to turn that off with a jest hereafter, however thou mayest think to do it now. This likewise he urges upon his pupil, as a reason why he should be religious; *By these, my son, be admonished, to fear God and keep his commandments, for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.*

MATT. HENRY.

Importance of Heavenly-mindedness.

A HEAVENLY mind is the nearest and truest way to a life of comfort. The countries far north are cold and frozen, because they are distant from the sun. What makes such frozen uncomfortable Christians, but their living so far from heaven? And what makes others so warm in comforts, but their living higher, and having nearer access to God? When the sun in the spring draws near our part of the earth, how do all things congratulate its approach! The earth looks green, the trees shoot forth, the plants revive, the birds sing, and all things smile upon us. If we would but try this life with God, and keep these hearts above, what a spring of joy would be within us? How should we forget our winter sorrows? How early should we rise to sing the praise of our great Creator? O Christian, get above. Those that have been there, have found it warmer; and I doubt not but

thou hast sometime tried it thyself. When have you largest comforts? Is it not, when thou hast conversed with God, and talked with the inhabitants of the higher world, and viewed their mansions, and filled thy soul with the fore-thoughts of glory? If thou knowest by experience what this practice is, I dare say thou knowest what spiritual joy is. If, as David professes, *the light of God's countenance more gladdens the heart than corn, and wine*; then surely they that draw nearest, and most behold it, must be fullest of these joys. Whom should we blame then, that we are so void of consolation, but our own negligent hearts? God hath provided us a crown of glory, and promised to set it shortly on our heads, and we will not so much as think of it; he bids us behold and rejoice, and we will not so much as look at it; and yet we complain for want of comfort. It is by believing that we are *filled with joy and peace*, and no longer than we continue our believing. It is *in hope* the saints rejoice, and no longer than they continue hoping. God's Spirit worketh our comforts, by setting our own spirits on work upon the promises, and raising our thoughts to the place of our comforts. As you would delight a covetous man by shewing him gold; so God delights his people by leading them, as it were, into heaven, and shewing them himself, and their rest with him. He does not cast in our joys while we are idle, or taken up with other things. He gives the fruits of the earth while we plough, and sow, and weed, and water, and dung, and dress, and with patience expect his blessing; so doth he give the joys of the soul. I intreat thee, reader, in the name of the Lord, and as thou valuest the life of constant joy, and that good conscience which is a continual feast, to set upon this work seriously, and learn the art of heavenly-mindedness, and thou shalt find the increase an hundred-fold, and the benefit abundantly exceed thy labour. But this is the misery of man's nature; though every man naturally hates sorrow, and loves the most merry and joyful life, yet few love the way to joy, or will endure the pains by which it is obtained; they will take the next that comes to hand, and content themselves with earthly pleasures, rather than they will ascend to heaven to seek it; and yet when all is done, they must have it there, or be without it.

A heart in heaven will be a most excellent preservative against temptations to sin. It will keep the heart well employed. When we are idle, we tempt the devil to tempt us; as careless persons make thieves. A heart in heaven can reply to the tempter, as Nehemiah did, *I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come.* It hath no leisure to be lustful or wanton, ambitious or worldly. If you were but busy in your lawful callings, you would not be so ready to hearken to temptations; much less if you were also busy above with God. Would a judge be persuaded to rise from the bench, when he is sitting upon life and death, to go and play with children in the streets? No more will a Christian, when he is taking a survey of his eternal rest, give ear to the alluring charms of Satan. The children of that kingdom should never have time for trifles, especially when they are employed in the affairs of the kingdom; and this employment is one of the saint's chief preservatives from temptations.

A heavenly mind is the freest from sin, because it hath truer and livelier apprehensions of spiritual things. . . . The men of the world, that dwell below, and know no other conversation but earthly, no wonder if their *understandings be darkened*, and Satan *takes them captive at his will*. How can worms and moles see, whose dwelling is always in the earth? While this dust is in their eyes, no wonder they mistake gain for godliness, sin for grace, the world for God, their own wills for the law of Christ, and, in the issue, hell for heaven. But when a Christian withdraws himself from his worldly thoughts, and begins to converse with God in heaven, methinks he is, as Nebuchadnezzar, taken from the beasts of the field to the throne, and *his reason returneth unto him*. When he hath had a glimpse of eternity, and looks down on the world again, how doth he charge with folly his neglects of Christ, his fleshly pleasures, his earthly cares! How doth he say to his *laughter*, *It is mad*; and to his vain *mirth*, *What doth it*? How doth he verily think there is no man so truly mad as wilful sinners, and unworthy slights of Christ and glory. . . .

A heavenly mind is also fortified against temptations, because the affections are thoroughly prepossessed with the high delights of another world. He that loves most, and not he that only knows most, will most easily resist the motions of sin.

ANTH.

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The will doth as sweetly relish goodness, as the understanding doth truth; and here lies much of a Christian's strength. . . .

Besides, whilst the heart is set on heaven, a man is under God's protection. If Satan then assault us, God is more engaged for our defence, and will doubtless stand by us, and say, *My grace is sufficient for thee*. When a man is in the way of God's blessing, he is in the less danger of sin's enticing. Amidst thy temptations, Christian reader, use much this powerful remedy; keep close with God by a heavenly mind; follow your business above with Christ, and you will find this a surer help than any other. *The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath*, Prov. xv. 24. Remember that *Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation*; for he *walked with God*: and that God said to Abraham, *Walk before me and be thou perfect*. BAXTER.

On Christian love and charity.

O DIVINE love! the sweet harmony of souls! the music of angels! the joy of God's own heart! the very darling of his bosom! the source of true happiness! the pure quintessence of heaven! that which reconciles the jarring principles of the world, and makes them all chime together! that which melts men's hearts into one another! See how St. Paul describes it, and it cannot choose but enamour your affections towards it: *Love envieth not, it is not puffed up, it doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*. I may add in a word, it is the best natured thing, the best complexioned thing in the world. Let us express this sweet harmonious affection in these jarring times: that so, if it be possible, we may tune the world into better music. Especially in matters of religion let us strive with all meekness to instruct and convince one another. Let us endeavour to promote the Gospel of peace, the dove-like Gospel with a dove-like spirit. This was the way by which the Gospel at first was propagated in the world: *Christ did not cry, nor lift up his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he did not break, and the smoking flax he did not quench*; and yet he brought forth judgment unto victory. He whispered the Gospel to us from

Mount Sion, in a still voice; and yet the sound thereof went out quickly throughout all the earth. The Gospel at first came down upon the world gently and softly, like the dew upon Gideon's fleece; and yet it quickly soaked quite through it: and doubtless this is the most effectual way to promote it farther. Sweetness and ingenuity will more command men's minds than passion, sourness, and severity: as the soft pillow sooner breaks the force of a blow than the hardest marble. Let us *follow truth in love*: and of the two indeed, be contented rather to miss of the conveying of a speculative truth, than to part with love. When we would convince men of any error by the strength of truth, let us withal pour the sweet balm of love upon their heads. Truth and love are two the most powerful things in the world; and when they both go together, they cannot easily be withstood. The golden beams of truth, and the silken cords of love, twisted together, will draw men on with a sweet violence whether they will or no.

Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for God and his Gospel, which is nothing else but our own tempestuous and stormy passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love. It never calls for *fire from heaven* to consume those that differ a little from us in their apprehensions. It is like that kind of lightning (which the philosophers speak of) that melts the sword within, but singeth not the scabbard: it strives to save the soul, but hurteth not the body. True zeal is a loving thing, and makes us always active to edification, and not to destruction. If we keep the fire of zeal within the chimney, in its own proper place, it never doth any hurt; it only warmeth, quickeneth and enliveneth us: but if once we let it break out, and catch hold of the thatch of our flesh, and kindle our corrupt nature, and set the house of our body on fire, it is no longer zeal, it is no heavenly fire, it is a most destructive and devouring thing. True zeal is an *ignis lambens*, a soft and gentle flame, that will not scorch one's hand; it is no predatory or voracious thing: but carnal and fleshly zeal is like the spirit of gunpowder set on fire, that tears and blows up all that stands before it. True zeal is like the vital heat in us, that we live upon, which we never feel to be angry or troublesome; but though

it gently feed upon the radical oil within us, that sweet balsam of our natural moisture, yet it lives lovingly with it, and maintains that by which it is fed: but that other furious and distempered zeal is nothing else but a fever in the soul. To conclude, we may learn what kind of zeal it is that we should make use of in promoting the Gospel, by an emblem of God's own given us in the Scripture, those fiery tongues that upon the day of Pentecost sat upon the Apostles; which sure were harmless flames, for we cannot read that they did any hurt, or that they did so much as singe a hair of their heads.

I will therefore conclude this with that of the Apostle; *Let us keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. Let this soft and silken knot of love tie our hearts together; though our heads and apprehensions cannot meet, as indeed they never will, but always stand at some distance off from one another. Our zeal, if it be heavenly, if it be true vestal fire kindled from above, will not delight to tarry here below, burning up straw and stubble and such combustible things, and sending up nothing but gross earthy fumes to heaven; but it will rise up, and return back pure as it came down, and will be ever striving to carry up men's hearts to God along with it. It will be only occupied about the promoting of those things which are unquestionably good; and when it moves in the irascible way, it will quarrel with nothing but sin. Here let our zeal busy and exercise itself, every one of us beginning first at our own hearts. Let us be more zealous than ever we have yet been in fighting against our lusts, in pulling down those *strongholds of sin and Satan* in our hearts. Here let us exercise all our courage and resolution, our manhood and magnanimity.

CUDWORTH.

Now, how well does this express the nature of charity! for, what else is love, but a sweet breathing of the Holy Spirit upon our passions, whereby the Holy Ghost does, as it did in the beginning of Genesis, move by a cherishing, quieting virtue, upon the sea of our passions! Did not the same Spirit come to Elijah in a soft whisper? he walks not, *in turbine*, in a strong wind, to raise a tempest in our affections. Now, when we have received this *ipsissimam Dei particulam*, (as Plato said of the soul,) this shred or portion of the

Holy Spirit, which is charity, how evenly and temperately do we behave ourselves to God, and all the world besides! how willingly and obediently do we submit ourselves to the performance of whatsoever our faith for God's word doth enjoin us! . . .

Charity is a virtue which never goes alone, and is busied in solitary places, being reserved and excluded from the society and communion of other graces; but it is that which seasons gives life and efficacy to, all the rest; without which, if it were possible for me to enjoy all the graces that the bountiful hand of God ever showered upon a reasonable creature, yet, if St. Paul speaks truth, I should be nothing worth: it is that which fulfils all the commandments. This is evident to all that shall but slightly, and in haste, read over 1 Cor. xiii., beginning with verse 4, and so onwards; where we may behold almost all the virtues that can be named, enwrapt in one virtue of charity and love, according to the several acts thereof, changed and transformed into so many several graces: it *suffereth long*, and so it is longanimity; it *is kind*, and so it is courtesy; it *vaunteth not itself*, and so it is modesty; it *is not puffed up*, and so it is humility; it *is not easily provoked*, and so it is lenity; it *thinketh no evil*, and so it is simplicity; it *rejoiceth in the truth*, and so it is verity; it *beareth all things*, and so it is fortitude; it *believeth all things*, and so it is faith; it *hopeth all things*, and so it is confidence; it *endureth all things*, and so it is patience; it *never faileth*, and so it is perseverance.

CHILLINGWORTH.

The whole church is the spiritual temple of God. Every believer is a living stone, laid in those sacred walls: what is our Christian love, but the mortar or cement, whereby these stones are fast joined together, to make up this heavenly building? without which, that precious fabric could not hold long together; but would be subject to disjoining, by those violent tempests of opposition, wherewith it is commonly beaten upon. There is no place for any loose stone in God's edifice: the whole church is one entire body: all the limbs must be held together by the ligaments of Christian love; if any one will be severed, and affect to subsist of itself, it hath lost its place in the body. Thus the Apostle: that we, *being sincere in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head,*

even Christ: From whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love, Eph. iv. 15, 16.

But, in case there happen to be differences in opinion concerning points not essential, not necessary to salvation; this diversity may not breed an alienation of affection. That charity, which can cover a multitude of sins, may much more cover many small dissensions of judgment. We cannot hope to be all, and at all times, equally enlightened. At how many and great weaknesses of judgment, did it please our merciful Saviour to connive, in his domestic disciples! they, that had so long sat at the sacred feet of him that spake as never man spake, were yet to seek for those Scriptures which had so clearly foretold his resurrection, John xx. 9: and, after that, were at a fault for the manner of his kingdom, Acts i. 6: yet he, that breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax, falls not harshly upon them for so foul an error and ignorance; but entertains them with all loving respect, not as followers only, but as friends, John xv. 15. And his great Apostle, after he had spent himself in his unweariable endeavours upon God's church, and had sown the seeds of wholesome and saving doctrine every where, what rank and noisome weeds of erroneous opinions rose up under his hand in the churches of Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Colosse, Philippi, and Thessalonica! these he labours to root out, with much zeal, with no bitterness: so opposing the errors, as not alienating his affection from the churches. These, these must be our precedents; pursuing that charge of the prime Apostle; *Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous,* 1 Pet. iii. 8: and that passionate and adjuring obtestation of the Apostle of the Gentiles: *If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,* Phil. ii. 1, 2. This is it, that gives beauty, strength, glory to the church of God upon earth; and brings it nearest to the resemblance of that triumphant part above, where there is all perfec-

tion of love and concord. In imitation whereof, the Psalmist, sweetly; *Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity!* Psal. cxxxiii. 1.

BP. HALL.

He that has the love that is in Christ, let him keep the commandments of Christ. For who is able to express the obligation of the love of God? What man is sufficient to declare, as is fitting, the excellency of its beauty? The height to which charity leads is inexpressible. Charity unites us to God; charity *covers the multitude of sins*, 1 Pet. iv. 8. Charity *endures all things*, 1 Cor. xiii. 7; is long-suffering in all things. There is nothing base and sordid in charity. Charity lifts not itself up above others; admits of no divisions; is not seditious, but does all things in peace and concord. By charity were all the elect of God made perfect: without it nothing is pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God. Through charity did the Lord join us unto himself, whilst, for the love that he bore towards us, our Lord Jesus Christ gave his own blood for us, by the will of God; his flesh for our flesh, his soul for our souls.

Ye see, beloved, how great and wonderful a thing charity is, and how that no expressions are sufficient to declare its perfection. But who is fit to be found in it? Even such only as God shall vouchsafe to make so. Let us, therefore, pray to him, and beseech him, that we may be worthy of it; that so we may live in charity, being unblamable, without human propensities, without respect of persons. All the ages of the world, from Adam even unto this day, are passed away; but they who have been made perfect in love have, by the grace of God, obtained a place among the righteous, and shall be made manifest in the judgment of the kingdom of Christ. For it is written, *Enter into thy chambers for a little space, till my anger and indignation shall pass away*: Isa. xxvi. 20. Happy then shall we be, beloved, if we shall have fulfilled the commandments of God, in the unity of love; that so, through love, our sins may be forgiven us. For so it is written, *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose mouth there is no guile*, Psal. xxxii. Now this blessing is fulfilled in those who are chosen by

God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
CLEMENT.

On Forgiveness of Injuries.

FORGIVENESS is a lesson taught in every page of the word of God. The advice of Solomon is: *Say not, I will do unto another as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work*, Prov. xxiv. 29.—*If thy enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head*, Prov. xxv. 22: that is, thou wilt melt his heart, and soften his resentment; *and the Lord shall reward thee*. The exhortation of the Apostles, expressed in every form, and on every occasion, is substantially this: *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you*. When Peter asked his divine Master how often he should forgive his offending brother, the answer showed that forgiveness had no bounds, that every offence must be forgiven. The precept is followed by a severe denunciation: *My heavenly Father shall deliver you to the tormentors, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother's trespasses*. This proves that your forgiveness must be complete, and without reserve. You may have calmed the transports of your rage, you may cease to pursue your adversary, and to seek his ruin. But you still harbour a secret resentment: you love to hear his character traduced; you see with pleasure the stroke of calamity fall upon him; his tolling bell sounds delightful in your ears. Or, if you are of a gentler disposition, still you use the common expression, 'I forgive, but I cannot forget.' But observe the words of Christ: you must *forgive from your hearts*. Your gall must become honey; the poison of asps must be changed into the milk of human kindness. This sentiment must be universal: *Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you*. And a most persuasive reason is added, *that you may be called the children of your Father, which is in heaven*, who extends his favour alike to all; *who maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*.

But the most affecting argument still

remains. Behold the example of Jesus Christ! Behold him in that fearful hour, when he was reduced to that extremity of mental suffering, as to shudder at that fate, for which he had assumed the nature of man, and to cry out: *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!* Behold him in those moments of affliction, which draw from him this pathetic exclamation: *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death!* Behold him suspended on the cross, in that fatal hour, when he can be supposed to have no other feeling than that of his torment. In those moments of agony and distress, unprecedented and inconceivable, surrounded by his tormentors and his murderers, his *love is stronger than death*, he prays for them! It is not enough that he does not bring down the thunders of heaven on their heads. It is not enough that he does not deliver them to eternal death. O no! he avails himself of all his influence with his Father in their behalf; he desires that the very blood, which they are shedding, may wash away the stains of their barbarity. He desires that the gates of heaven, which are open to receive him, may one day *lift up their everlasting heads* to make them partakers of eternal happiness. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!* After his resurrection, he retains the same charity, the same forgiveness, the same love of his enemies. Go, says he to his disciples, *preach the Gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* Let those, whose hands were imbrued in my blood; let him, who nailed my hands and my feet; let him, who thrust his spear into my side, have the first offer of my salvation.

When you have examined the extent of this love, this forgiveness, and this charity, in the great pattern of all excellence, suffer me to conduct you in imagination to the feet of the crucified Jesus. Bring with you your most detested enemies, those, who have wounded your honour, injured your character, ruined your interest; then let me ask you, whether your anger, your resentment, your desire of revenge, can still subsist at the sight of Jesus Christ, suspended on the cross, and in the agonies of death praying for his murderers?

Let me conjure you by the compassion of God, by the charity of Christ, to sacrifice your hatred, your animosities, and your vengeance, on the altar of gratitude. Learn from Jesus to love and to forgive!

Let the first idea excited in your minds by the injuries, which you suffer from the enmity, the envy, the jealousy, the ingratitude, and the perfidy of others, be the example and the precepts of that Saviour, who has said: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!* Let the blood of Jesus, which implores pardon for you in heaven, obtain it from you for your brethren upon earth! Remember that charity is the darling attribute of him, who will one day be your Judge. Remember that if the principles of the Gospel of love and charity disarm you of your resentment against your enemies, the Divine justice will be disarmed against you. *If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

REV. DR. VALPY.

The excellence of Charity.

NATURAL reason is offended with this baseness and shortness of words; for it is soon said, *Believe in Christ*; and again, *Love thy neighbour as thyself*. Therefore it despiseth both the doctrine of faith and true good works. Notwithstanding, this base and vile word of faith, as reason taketh it, *Believe in Christ*, is the power of God to the faithful, whereby they overcome sin, death, the devil, &c.; whereby also they attain salvation and eternal life. Thus to serve one another through love, that is, to instruct him that goeth astray, to comfort him that is afflicted, to raise up him that is weak, to help thy neighbour by all means possible, to bear with his infirmities, to endure troubles, labours, ingratitude, and contempt in the church, and in civil life and conversation to obey the magistrate, to give due honour to thy parents, to be patient at home with a forward wife and an unruly family, &c.: these, I say, are works which reason judgeth to be of no value. But indeed they are such works, that the whole world is not able to comprehend the excellency and worthiness thereof (for it doth not measure works or any other thing by the word of God, but by the judgment of wicked, blind, and foolish reason): yea, it knoweth not the value of any one of the least good works that can be, which are true good works indeed.

Therefore, when men dream that they know well enough the commandment of charity, they are utterly deceived. Indeed they have it written in their heart: for they naturally judge that a man ought to

do unto another, as he would another should do unto him. But it followeth not therefore that they understand it; for if they did, they would also perform it indeed, and would prefer love and charity before all their works. They would not so highly esteem their own superstitious toys, as to go with a heavy countenance, hanging down the head, to live unmarried, to live with bread and water, to dwell in the wilderness, to be poorly apparelled, &c. These monstrous and superstitious works, which they have devised and chosen unto themselves, God neither commanding nor approving the same, they esteem to be so holy and so excellent, that they surmount and darken charity, which is, as it were, the sun of all good works. So great and incomprehensible is the blindness of man's reason, that it is unable, not only to judge rightly of the doctrine of faith, but also of external conversation and works. Wherefore we must fight strongly, as well against the opinions of our own heart, to the which we are naturally more inclined in the matter of salvation than to the word of God, as also against the counterfeit visor and holy show of our own will-works: that so we may learn to magnify the works which every man doth in his vocation, although they seem outwardly never so base and contemptible, if they have the warrant of God's word; and, contrariwise, to despise those works which reason chooseth without the commandment of God, seem they never so excellent and holy.

LUTHER.

On Christian Candour.

CANDOUR, I think, may in general be considered as regarding rather persons than sentiments; though, indeed, when sentiments are embraced by any, that are fundamentally wrong, it will be very difficult to separate them, and impossible not to involve the person embracing them, and continuing in them, in the conclusions which we draw as to the sentiments. Candour, therefore, must respect either persons who do not hold fundamental errors, or persons who do; and its operations should be very different, according to these different objects. With regard to those who are not fundamentally wrong, it will exercise itself both towards their persons and their sentiments. It will lead us to make all allowances for the weakness and infirmities of human nature, even in those things which appear to us contrary to the

clearest evidence; and in things which are doubtful to suspect our own judgments, and grant to others a right of determining and a possibility of determining better than ourselves. This, I think, is the most peculiar province of candour. If it be exercised towards those who hold fundamental errors, it must be exercised towards their persons, but by no means to their sentiments. When I speak of fundamental error, I mean not only that which is really so, but that which, upon mature and deliberate judgment, appears to me to be so. For, however disposed to candour, if my mind firmly embraces such a view, it must have the same effect upon me, whether in itself right or wrong; and I cannot help pronouncing that, according to my judgment, it is so in all its consequences. It is impossible, therefore, to view any sentiments in such a light, and at the same time to suppose, that they who embrace them are fundamentally right. I must totally condemn such opinions, or give up the essential propriety of my own; yea, must hold this self-evident contradiction, that certain principles of faith are absolutely essential to Christianity; and yet the contrary principles of faith do not destroy the being of Christianity. Since candour then cannot be exercised towards such sentiments, but only to the persons who embrace them, the next consideration is, how far the persons themselves can be freed from the determination which we make as to the sentiments, and in what way my candour must exercise itself towards these. I must now suppose that a person has, upon deliberate and serious inquiry, embraced these views; that he espouses them, professes them, and maintains them. I would here allow much to human infirmity, but, I believe, much more must be allowed for human depravity. And, while I pronounce that such views are contrary to the essential doctrines of Christianity, if I believe what I say, I cannot but conceive, that he who embraces them is, at present, uninterested in the Christian covenant, destitute of that which belongs to the essential character of a Christian, and as far from Christ, yea, farther, than a virtuous heathen. How then shall I exercise my candour? What is its business here? Surely not to pronounce that he may be right; yea, may be right if he continue in his present views; but to feel for him as a fellow-sinner, that knows something of the depravity of the human heart; to pity his si-

tuation; to pray that his eyes may be enlightened by the divine teaching of that Spirit, that *leads into all necessary truth*, and those corrupt principles of his heart, which have been the sources of his erroneous judgment, may be changed by Almighty grace. This is all that true candour can possibly do, till either I coincide with him in sentiment, or give up my views of the necessity of such truth, and feel that, however excellent, it is not absolutely important. But I cannot, for the sake of extenuating human infirmity, or guilt, either deny what I conceive to be truth, or the importance of it: nor would it be of any utility if I could; for whatever I may wish to conceive of the state of such a person, the real matter of fact will not be affected by my kind desires, or those hopes which friendship and compassion have led me to form. For, after all, candour must have certain limits, and those limits are truth. . . . I conceive, likewise, that great difference must be made between those who, through weakness of judgment, the trial of faith, or through the power of temptation, may at times be induced to give too much attention to unbelieving and doubtful apprehensions, and those who have fixed their creed in error, and confessedly avow and defend it. The waverings of an honest heart are essentially different from the bold assumptions of unsanctified reasonings and corrupt reasoners. Wherever we can hope we discern the evidence of the former; it gives us a fair opening for the kindest exercise of benevolence and candour; but wherever we discern the latter, it is *repentance to an acknowledgment of the truth* that can alone induce any favourable opinion or expectation. There is likewise another case where candour seems peculiarly suitable. A person who, having never obtained any great light or knowledge of divine things, or who is just now beginning to make serious inquiry about his soul, and the doctrines of Christianity, may for a time be enveloped in darkness and uncertainty, and how long we know not. But if there be any thing genuine and true at heart, there will be a disposition open to admit the truth; and we shall see such a one rather going forward, though by slow degrees, than receding. Here I can hope the best; I would wait the issue with patient expectation, and trust that, in the search of truth, it will one day break in with full lus-

tre and energy on his mind. But when, on the contrary, a man who has possessed superior light, has once professed the truths of the Gospel, but, by a retrograde motion, has been withdrawing from them by successive steps, till at last he is arrived at a total denial of what we esteem the great fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, or even within a few steps of open infidelity, must I not suspect that no trifling agent has been the cause of so awful a revolution in sentiment? must I not pronounce, in my own heart, his present state dangerous in the extreme, and the issue of such a conduct, if continued in, however affecting the consideration and severe the sentence, damnable? For there are such things (what they may be is not now the question) as *damnable heresies*.

REV. W. GOODE.

On Hope.

TELL me, why dost thou hope, thou that continuest still in an unrepentant estate, in an habitual opposition to God's holy commandments? Art thou resolved to hope, because thou hast a mind to it, upon no ground, when thou oughtest rather to fear, almost to despair? or rather, canst thou persuade thyself in earnest, that this is indeed a hope? Is it not a fancy of thine own brain, or rather a temptation of the devil? Rom. v. 5. *Hope*, which is hope indeed, (which is not a fancy and chimera) *maketh not ashamed*, saith St. Paul: a man may with confidence, without confusion of face, profess and maintain it. But such a hope as this is, which is not a hope in earnest, how it will disgrace a man, and put him out of countenance, when God shall ask him why he did offer to hope?

Let thy conscience now answer me, who-soever thou art, in such a state. Thou that knowest how often God hath said, nay, sworn in his wrath, that none of those which continue disobedient shall enter into his rest! That none shall be partakers of the second resurrection unto glory, but those that have been partakers of the first unto grace. Canst thou for all this imagine, that God has such a peculiar, particular affection and respect to thee, who art yet a slave of the devil's, that he will be content to strain his truth and veracity, to break his oath for thy company? Shall the whole Scripture, which promises glory

to none but the godly, for thy sake be turned into a romance, into a melancholy tale to frighten children withal? No, no, assure thyself, it is not a conceit of election, which will save thee; thou must work, and work hard, in fear and trembling, before God will raise in thee the good spirit of Christian hope.

For, to say the truth, of all divine graces, hope is incomparably the hardest to attain unto: and the reason is evident, because it presupposes the possession of all other graces before it. And yet, for all this, nothing counted so easy, now-a-days, as hope, though men both are and resolve to be never so wicked: nay, and it is well if hope will serve their turn; they must have an infallible assurance, a divine faith of everlasting glory; and no manner of sins, though ever so heinous, ever so oft committed, shall be able to weaken this their assurance, that they are resolved of. This they think is a spell strong enough for the devil in all assaults; when the devil is more joyed and comforted to see them so vainly delude themselves, than they themselves possibly can be. This for my first assertion: now follows the second.

When I say that the interest which a Christian ordinarily has in the promises of God, is *hope*; I mean, it is not absolute and irrespective, but depending upon conditions, namely, grace and perseverance therein. And this I took for granted, for I never heard of any yet, that denied perseverance to be necessary to salvation. If then his interest be by hope, then it is not yet by faith, properly so called; for it is not possible that the same object (considered with the same circumstances at the same time) should be the object both of faith and hope. For example, I believe by a divine faith, i. e. a faith grounded upon God's word, that there shall be a resurrection of the flesh, even of this flesh of mine; and I believe it firmly, because God hath said that he will bring it to pass; neither is there any condition of mine pre-required to the performance of this promise of God; for howsoever I behave myself here in this world, whether well or ill, it matters not, my behaviour cannot make God alter his resolution. Now, if I assuredly believe this, it would be improper and absurd for me to say, I hope there will be a resurrection of my body; for when I say, I hope any thing, I imply a possibility, in nature, that such a thing may

not be, which in this case I cannot do without infidelity.

But, on the other side, I hope that God will raise this flesh of mine unto glory, and I hope this upon safe grounds: therefore, if it be true that I hope it, I cannot properly be said to believe it, because my salvation yet depends upon conditions, namely, perseverance. Therefore, let me propose this one question to any man's conscience: Hast thou such an assurance of salvation given thee of God, that hope is quite evacuated in thee? Is there no such virtue left in thee as hope? Surely God hath dealt extraordinarily mercifully with thee; thou art many degrees gone beyond the state of those believers which St. Paul speaks of, and includes himself in the number, when he saith, *We live by hope*; for thou dost not live by hope, thou art exalted above it. Notwithstanding, I beseech you, consider well upon the matter (for it concerns you very much); be not too hasty to credit fancies, when conceits of assurance or impeccability shall be suggested to your minds. There may be great danger of confidence ungrounded; a confidence only taken upon trust from other men's words or opinions.

Do I go about now (think you) to bereave you, or cozen you of any spiritual comfort in this life? Do I envy any of you your assurance? Alas! why should I deal so with you? For I was never injured by you; or, if I were, surely, of all places, I would not make choice of this to execute my revenge in: or, if I thought that such assurance were ordinarily to be had, at least necessary to the making up of a justifying faith, (and have you never heard it said so?) would I not, think you, strive and endeavour to obtain it at any rate, even with the loss of all worldly comforts? Yes, certainly, I would count them all but as dross and dung in comparison of it. But I confess unto you, I am yet contented with enjoying heaven by hope: and I bless Almighty God, that he hath dealt so graciously with me, that I should dare to hope for it, and not be ashamed and confounded by my hope: and if there be any amongst you that will vouchsafe to content himself with such a neglected degree of comfort, with only hope, and no more, I will not enter into comparison with those that are perfect; but I dare promise him, that all those troublesome pleasures which do so ravish the men of this world, shall be as

nothing; yea, as afflictions and torments, in comparison of those spiritual, heavenly joys, which hope, well and legally achieved, will be able to afford us: no dangers will there be of terrors or jealousies, as if God would happen to grow weary, or repent himself of any grace or blessing which he hath bestowed upon us.

For, tell me; do you think that Adam, while he continued in his innocency, had any grudgings of suspicions or fears? Was he not, during that time, in as great a quiet and serenity of mind, as any of us dare hope for? And yet the most that he could do then, was to hope that he might continue in that state even to the end: the event shews, he could not have an infallible faith of his perseverance. If then such a contented, settled mind could accompany Adam in paradise, even when he knew it was in his power, with but reaching out his hand, and tasting an apple, to degrade himself from that happy estate; surely, we Christians have much more reason to rejoice in our hope, since we know assuredly, that as God has been so gracious to begin this good work in us, so he will not be wanting to perfect it even to the end, if we will but perform our parts, which he has already given us more than sufficient grace to do, and will never fail to supply us with more, for the asking; nay, more, (which are surer grounds to build upon, than ever Adam had) since we know, that not one, nor ten, nor a hundred sins, shall be able, so irreparably to cast us out of God's favour, but that he will be willing, upon our repentance, especially calling to mind his old mercies, to restore us again to our lost happiness.

Neither are we utterly excluded from all assurance; for there is a *πληροφορία τῆς ἐλπίδος*, a *full assurance of hope*, saith St. Paul, Heb. vi. 11. *This hope we have as a sure anchor of the soul*, fastened on a rock, ver. 19. The rock cannot fail us, the anchor will not; all the danger is in the cable or chain of spiritual graces, whereby we are fastened to this rock: if this chain but hold, no tempest, no winds, no floods can endanger us. And part of our hope respects this chain; for God has promised his willingness and readiness to strengthen it every day more and more, till our state shall be so changed, that there shall be no such things as tempests known, no tossings of waves, no tumults of winds, nor fears of leaking or decay in the vessel,

but all calmness and security. And, for the attaining to this happy, unchangeable estate, where is it that we place our hope? truly our hope is even in thee, O God, who, if thou shalt think it convenient or necessary for us, wilt enlarge this our hope into confidence, and add unto that assurance, and swallow up all in possession: and that not for any merits of ours, but only for thy free undeserved mercies in our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom alone thou art well pleased: to whom, with thee, O Father, and the blessed Spirit, be ascribed by us, and thy whole church, the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen. CHILLINGWORTH.

On Humility.

WE must not think in a giant-like pride to scale the walls of heaven by our own works, and by force thereof to take the strong fort of blessedness, and wrest the crown of glory out of God's hands whether he will or no. We must not think to commence a suit in heaven for happiness, upon such a poor and weak plea as our own external compliance with the old law is. We must not think to deal with God in the method of commutative justice, and to challenge eternal life as the just reward of our great merits, and the hire due to us for our labour and toil we have taken in God's vineyard. No, *God resists the proud, but giveth grace to the humble*, James iv. 6. It must be a humble and self-denying address of a soul dissolved into a deep and piercing sense of its own nothingness and unprofitableness, that can be capable of the Divine bounty: *he fills the hungry with good things, but the rich he sends empty away*, Luke i. 53. They are the hungry and thirsty souls, always gasping after the living springs of Divine grace, as the parched ground in the desert doth for the dew of heaven, ready to drink them in by a constant dependence upon God; souls that by a living, watchful, and diligent faith, spreading forth themselves in all obsequious reverence and love of him, wait upon him *as the eyes of a handmaid wait on the hand of her mistress*: these are they that he delights to satiate with his goodness. Those that being mastered by a strong sense of their own indigency, their pinching and pressing poverty, and his all-sufficient fulness, trust in him as an almighty Saviour, and in the most ardent

manner pursue after that perfection to which his grace is leading them; those that cannot satisfy themselves in a bare performance of some external acts of righteousness, or an external observance of a law without them, but with the most greedy and fervent ambition pursue after such an acquaintance with his Divine Spirit as may breathe an inward life through all the powers of their souls, and beget in them a vital form and soul of Divine goodness. These are the spiritual seed of faithful Abraham, the sons of the free-woman, and heirs of the promises, to whom all are made, *Yea, and Amen in Christ Jesus*, 2 Cor. i. 20. These are they which shall abide in the house for ever, when the sons of the bond-woman, those that are only Arabian proselytes, shall be cast out. REV. J. SMITH.

Examine whether you advance in humility. This is a silent but most excellent grace; and they who are most eminent in it are dearest to God, and most fit for the communications of his presence to them. Do you then feel your mind more emptied of proud and haughty imaginations; not prone so much to look back upon past services, which it has performed, as forward to those which are yet before you, and inward upon the remaining imperfections of your heart? Do you more tenderly observe your daily slips and miscarriages, and find yourself disposed to mourn over those things before the Lord, that once passed with you as slight matters; though when you come to survey them, as in the presence of God, you find they were not wholly involuntary, or free from guilt? Do you feel in your breast a deeper apprehension of the infinite majesty of the blessed God, and of the glory of his natural and moral perfections; so as, in consequence of these views, to perceive yourself (as it were) annihilated in his presence, and to shrink into less than nothing, and vanity, Isa. xl. 17. If this be your temper, God will look upon you with particular favor, and will visit you more and more with the distinguished blessings of his grace.

But there is another great branch and effect of Christian humility. Let me therefore farther inquire: are you more frequently renewing your application, your sincere, steady, determinate application, to the righteousness and blood of Christ,

as being sensible how unworthy you are to appear before God, otherwise than in him? And do the remaining corruptions of your heart humble you before him, though the disorders of your life are in a great measure cured? Are you more earnest to obtain the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit; and have you such a sense of your own weakness, as to engage you to depend, in all the duties you perform, upon the communications of his grace, to help your infirmities, Rom. viii. 26. Can you at the close of your most religious, exemplary, and useful days, blush before God for the deficiencies of them, while others, perhaps, may be ready to admire and extol your conduct? And while you give the glory of all that has been right to him, from whom the strength and grace has been derived, are you coming to the blood of sprinkling, to free you from the guilt which mingles itself even with the best of your services? Do you learn to receive the bounties of Providence, not only with thankfulness as coming from God, but with a mixture of shame and confusion too, under a consciousness that you do not deserve them, and are continually forfeiting them? And do you justify Providence in your afflictions and disappointments, even while many are flourishing around you in the full bloom of prosperity, whose offences have been more visible at least, and more notorious than yours. DR. DODDRIDGE.

If there be a favourite point in Scripture, it is the recommendation of humility. The truly humble, with all their imperfections, will be admitted into heaven; the proud, with all the virtue compatible with pride, will be excluded. Those doctrines, therefore, which support humility must be divine: those which nourish pride must be *earthly, sensual, devilish*. Now the evangelical doctrines just mentioned are all of the former sort. The more they are relished and admired, the more do they direct the mind to honour God, to feel even infinite obligation to him, to entertain the lowest ideas of ourselves, to confound the pride of intellect, of riches, of virtue, of every thing human. To sing *salvation to God and the Lamb*, to confess that we only deserve destruction, and to ascribe our deliverance from it to the atoning blood of Jesus, this is the employment of heaven. The tastes and tempers adapted to such employment must be formed here on earth

by *grace* ; and the whole work of the Spirit is to produce and support these dispositions. And, in the words and actions of holy men, we have seen this effect. They believed heartily the truth of doctrines the most humiliating. They were *poor in spirit*, and *patient* under the severest treatment and the most cruel injuries, because they were conscious of deserving much worse : they were contented in the meanest circumstances, because they felt the beauty of *his* condescension, *who though he was rich became poor for their sakes*, and who has provided for them sure and eternal riches. They were serene and confident in God, because they viewed *him* as their Father through the grace of Christ : they were full of charity, because they knew the love of God in Christ ; and *in honour* they *preferred others* to themselves, because they were ever conscious of their own depravity : in fine, they gladly endured reproach for Christ's sake, because they knew that his kingdom was not of this world.

Now, take from these men the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, and all the motives and springs within them of those actions, which are peculiar to the Christian, are annihilated. Mere morals, as taught by sensible heathens, and whatever was by them esteemed reputable in social life, may remain ; but that, which is properly of a pious and humble nature, is no more.

For, whoever daily feels himself to be helpless, corrupt, and unworthy ; the man, whose hope of Divine favour cannot exist for a moment, but under the belief of the most stupendous grace ; the man, who is compelled to pray, by the sense of his constant wants, and who experiences the answer of prayer, by repeated supernatural aids ; such a one must be habituated to the perpetual exercise of cultivating *humbling* reflections concerning himself, and *grateful* feelings towards his Maker. It is easy to see what a foundation is here laid of meekness, gentleness, modesty, submission to the will of God, and of genuine compassion for the most wicked and most injurious ; the truly humbled Christian always remembering that he himself, by nature, is *a child of wrath* as well as others. Nor is there one among the numerous virtues, for which the primitive Christians were so much renowned, but it may be traced up to these principles.

MILNER.

What is humility ? It is not a mere sense of our weakness as creatures, nor a general acknowledgment that we are sinners ; but a deep and abiding consciousness of our guilty and undone state ; a consciousness, that darkness itself is not more opposite to light, than we are to the pure and holy law of God. It is a sense of our utter alienation from God, yea, and of enmity against him ; insomuch, that *every imagination of the thoughts of our heart is only evil continually* : it is such a sense of this as makes us really to *lothe and abhor ourselves, and to repent before God in dust and ashes*. This is that *broken and contrite heart which God will not despise*. But where do we find persons penetrated with this contrition, and smiting on their breasts, and crying for mercy as sinners deserving of God's wrath and indignation ? Or, if we saw one under such distressing apprehensions, who amongst us would not be ready to think that he carried matters to excess ; and that, unless he had been guilty of some sins beyond what were commonly committed, he had no need for such excessive griefs and sorrows ? It is well known that such penitents are few ; and that such comforters, if indeed disgust did not preclude any attempt to administer comfort, would be found in every company we meet with. But to what is all this owing ? It arises from men's ignorance of the Law : they try not either themselves or others by so high a standard ; and, being insensible of their departures from it, they see no cause for such humiliation on account of those departures. In fact, the very idea of such humility enters not into the mind of the natural man : and, copious as were the languages of Greece and Rome, they had no word whereby to express it. With the word which they used to express their idea of humility, they associated rather the notion of meanness, than of an exalted virtue : and, though all of us profess to admire humility as a grace, there is not in the universe a man, in his natural state, that either possesses or approves of it, according to its real import. REV. C. SIMEON.

Humility is the first-fruit of religion. In the mouth of our Lord there is no maxim so frequent as the following : *Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. Religion, and that alone, teaches *absolute*

humility; by which I mean, a sense of our *absolute* nothingness in the view of infinite greatness and excellence. That sense of inferiority which results from the comparison of men with each other is often an unwelcome sentiment, forced upon the mind, which may rather embitter the temper than soften it: that which devotion impresses is soothing and delightful. The devout man loves to lie low at the footstool of his Creator, because it is then he attains the most lively perceptions of the Divine excellence, and the most tranquil confidence in the Divine favour. In so august a presence he sees all distinctions lost, and all beings reduced to the same level. He looks at his superiors without envy, and his inferiors without contempt: and when from this elevation he descends to mix in society, the conviction of superiority, which must in many instances be felt, is a calm inference of the understanding, and no longer a busy, importunate passion of the heart. REV. R. HALL.

Spirit of Meekness honourable.

LET the world account it a despicable simplicity, seek you still more of that dove-like spirit, the spirit of meekness and blessing. It is a poor glory to vie in railings, to contest in that faculty, or in any kind of vindictive returns of evil: the most abject creatures have abundance of that great spirit, as foolish, poor-spirited persons account it; but *it is the glory of man to pass by a transgression*, Prov. xix. 11; it is the noblest victory. And as we mentioned, the highest example, God, is our pattern in love and compassions: we are well warranted to endeavour to be like him in this. Men esteem much more highly some other virtues which make more show, and trample upon these, love, and compassion, and meekness. But though these violets grow low, and are of a dark colour, yet they are of a very sweet and diffusive smell, odoriferous graces; and the Lord propounds himself our example in them, Matt. v. 44, 45, *To love them that hate you, and bless them that curse you, is to be truly the children of your Father, your Father which is in heaven.* It is a kind of perfection. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*, ver. 48. *He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good.* Be you like it: howsoever men behave themselves, keep you your course, and let your benign influence,

as you can, do good to all. And Jesus Christ sets in himself these things before us, *learn of me*, not to heal the sick, or raise the dead, but *learn, for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Matt. xi. 29. And if you be his followers, this is your way, as the Apostle here addeth, *Hereunto are you called*; and this is the end of it, agreeably to the way, *that you may inherit a blessing*.

LEIGHTON.

Guards against levity of Temper.

THE sublime truths of Christianity demand our frequent review. Let us often rise high in our thoughts, and let our faith look far backwards to the eternal ages before this world was. Let us contemplate the love of God the Father, in contriving our salvation, before he stretched abroad these heavens, or laid the foundations of this earth. Let us think of the condescension of his mercy, when he chose fallen perishing sinners to be the objects of his everlasting love. Let us dwell upon his compassion to man, when he appointed his own Son to take flesh upon him, and to become our Mediator and Sacrifice. Let us survey with holy wonder the various glories of the Son of God, *by whom and for whom all things were made; who upholds all things by the word of his power: and who is the express image of his Father.* Let us behold him consenting to hide all these honours behind a veil of flesh and blood, walking the streets of Jerusalem, and travelling on foot through the villages of Israel, attended with a few poor despicable men, or surrounded with the reproaches of the blaspheming Jews. Let us look upon this illustrious person, who was adored by angels, yet unknown and unglorified among the sons of men, and humbled, even to death and the grave; then gaze on him rising again from the dead, and *declared to be the Son of God, with power*, exalted *at the right hand of the Majesty on high*, and ruling all the millions of inhabitants of the visible and invisible worlds. Surely if our souls were inured to the meditation of such sublime wonders as these, we should not easily immerse ourselves in trifles and fooleries.

Again, let us meditate on the more awful doctrines, the more solemn and dreadful truths of our religion, and these will be an effectual restraint to a vain temper of mind. Let us think on the justice

of God, manifested in the destruction of sinners, in all ages, when it appeared in a prodigious flood of water, and with a deluge of ruin testified against the wickedness of the old world; and when it came down in flaming fire upon Sodom and upon the cities of the Plain. Let us meditate on the *wrath of God*, that has been revealed in numerous instances *against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*. Let us contemplate that divine and severe justice, that appeared in the sufferings and death of God's own Son, when *it pleased the Father to bruise him, and to make his soul an offering for sin*. Let us think of his agonies in the garden, and on the cross, when he bore the weight of our iniquities, and stood in the place of sinners. Let us send our thoughts down to the regions of death and hell, and behold the fallen angels, bound in chains of darkness, and groaning under present torments, yet waiting for the day of greater vengeance. Let us think with ourselves what millions of our fellow-sinners, the sons and daughters of Adam, lie there banished from the presence of the Lord, and tormented with fire in their consciences, without remedy, and without hope, and say, why are not we there too?

Let us often look forward to the awful moment of our death, and the time of our departure from all the flattering scenes of this present world. This will put a damp upon the vainest mind, and hang with a painful weight upon the sons of mirth and levity. This will be a means to restrain us from that foolish and trifling behaviour, which otherwise our tempers might incline us to. And let us remember the solemn hour when we must stand before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, divested of all these gaudy shows of life, in which we are now ready to pride ourselves; and there we must receive a sentence without repeal, which shall send us to heaven or to hell at once, and fix our everlasting state. These are terrors or glories too solemn to be trifled with; these are thoughts that will hold our souls awake and serious; this will preserve that gravity of mind which becomes a Christian, and keep us in a prepared temper to fulfil present duty, and to wait the final event of all things. DR. WATTS.

We should be waiting on God in the way of His Providence.

WAIT upon God in the way of his

Providence. Wait upon him as he is a faithful Creator, 1 Pet. iv. 19; much more since the title of being our Redeemer is added to that of our Creator, which strengthens his relation to us. Not to wait, disparageth his care, bounds his power, or reflects upon his wisdom: as if he had stripped himself of his immense goodness, and forgot both his promise and his people; as if he had cancelled the covenant, and given up his whole interest to the lusts of men. Wait in the saddest appearances. The hour of Christ's death was dismal in the world, and darkness was upon the earth; a miraculous eclipse of the sun, taken notice of by the very heathens; yet were we never nearer to happiness than in that dreadful time when our Saviour was most dyed in his own blood. The sanguine complexion of the evening sky is a presage of a fair succeeding morning; so, many times is the red vesture of the church.

1. Wait upon him obediently. Commit your souls to God, but in well-doing, 1 Pet. iv. 19. Use no indirect means; a contempt of the precept cannot consist with faith in either promise or providence. The obeying part is ours, the governing part is God's. *Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long, for surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off*, Prov. xxiii. 17. God will govern all the day, but we must fear him all the day. When fear on our part, attends government on God's part, there will be an end of our carnal fears, and a good issue of our hopes. The greatest deliverances of his church have been when his people has stood still, Exod. xiv. 13. As that deliverance was a type of all future ones, and a ground of faith, so the carriage God enjoined was a rule to his people in all future straits. It is against the laws of God's government for those listed in his service to stir without order. The law is our standing rule of duty. Providence cannot be a standing visible rule, because of the variety and seeming crossness of it sometimes to our apprehensions. Do not presume to lead God, but be led by him. It is our safety to follow him; it is our sin and danger to presume to be his directors. We may lose ourselves when we are our own blind guides, and fall into a ditch; but when we follow God, he hath wisdom to foresee the precipices we may

stumble into, and goodness to divert us from them. By interposing carnal devices, men may perhaps have their ends, but with little comfort, perhaps much bitterness to themselves. Jacob by his hasty using his own and his mother's sinful project for the blessing, got it indeed, but a cross too, for he was a man of sorrows all his days. By waiting in God's way, we shall have our ends with more sweetness, because purely a fruit of God's care and goodness.

2. Wait patiently. How often are our spirits troubled about future events, and afraid of the evil which threatens us, as if we were in pain for God, and in doubt of his wise conduct! Think not God's time too long. He waits as much for a fit opportunity to show his mercy as you can wait for the enjoyment of it. *Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; blessed are all they that wait for him*, Isa. xlii. 18. It is a part of our blessedness to wait for God, since it is a part of God's kindness to wait for a fit season to be gracious to us. It is not for us to prescribe rules to God, but follow the rules he prescribes to us. He hath freely made his promise, let him be master of his own time to make it good. He will show as much wisdom in accomplishing, as he did mercy in declaring it. God can do things in a moment, but it is his wisdom to take time, that his people may have time to exercise their trust, their hope, and their patience. He will take time in the ways of his providence as well as he did in the works of creation. He allotted six days to that which he could have framed in a minute. He is Judge of what is needful for us, and when it is needful for us. If God should give us that, which is a mercy in its own nature, many times when we desire it, it might not be a mercy. If we will trust the skill of his wisdom for the best season, it cannot but be a mercy, for he will give it us with his own glory and grace wrapt up in it, which will make it sweeter to himself when his wisdom is honoured, and sweeter to us when our good is promoted. God's methods appear in the end both wiser and better than our frames. Infinite goodness aims more at our welfare, than our shallow self-love; and infinite wisdom can conduct things to our welfare better than our short-sighted skill. He that knows all the moments of time, knows best how to time his actions. As God stayed for a fulness

of time to bring the great redemption by Christ into the world; so he stays for a fulness of time to bring all the great consequences and appendices of it unto his church. Every thing is beautiful in his time. In its own time, in God's time, not in ours, Eccles. iii. 11.

3. Wait constantly. Though the wheels of Providence seem sometimes to stand still, Ezek. i. 21, and God seems to put a period to the care of his church; yet let not us neglect our duty. Wait a while, and the wheels will be put upon their former rolling. Some particular passages of Providence may trouble us for a while, but in the issue God may answer our desires above our expectations, and thereby confute our fears. His providences are sometimes like rivers that run under ground, out of sight; but will rise again with a delightful stream, with some new medicinal quality, contracted from the earth by the way. Joseph, a prisoner, waits upon God for his liberty, and God gives him freedom with preferment. God can bring about his people's safety by unexpected ways. Who would have imagined before, that his own dream should make him a captive, and Pharaoh's dream make him a favourite? The chief butler remembers him not, till Pharaoh was in an exigency, and the divining skill of the wise men of Egypt confounded. Joseph lost nothing by waiting upon God, who made so many circumstances concur to promote his honour. Wait therefore upon him in the sorest afflictions. The church is only afflicted in mercy, but the enemies of it are pulled up by the roots. *I am with thee to save thee; though I make a full end of the nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure*, Jer. xxx. 11. God deals with his people as a father, who corrects to reform, not to destroy; but with his enemies he deals as a judge. God's providence, like Moses' rod, may seem sometimes a devouring serpent, but it is to convince the Egyptians, and deliver the Israelites.

4. Wait in the use of lawful means for preservation. Not to use means, is to slight his providence, not to trust it. It seems not to consist with the wisdom of God to order things always so as to be necessitated to put forth an extraordinary power in things which his creatures by a common providence can naturally accom-

plish. God saves by natural means; when they will not serve the turn, he will save by supernatural. God chose an ark to preserve Noah in. He did not want supernatural means for his preservation. He might have caught him up in a cloud, and continued him there till the drying up of the waters. Noah doth not dispute the business with God, but prepares an ark according to his order, and he was righteous in his obedience, as well as in his trust. God would not preserve our Saviour by a miracle, when ordinary means would serve the turn. He commands Joseph by his angel to flee into Egypt with the child, Matt. ii. 13. Joseph desires not God to preserve him by an extraordinary power, to save his pains of travelling; he submits to God's order, and God quickly clears the way for his return. Indeed sometimes the wheels of Providence are lifted up from the earth, and do not go in the ordinary tracks, Ezek. i. 19. But miracles must be left to God's pleasure; for us to desire them, is to tempt our great Governor.

CHARNOCK.

On Retirement.

It is indeed a standing miracle of the Gospel, that in reconciling man to God, it reconciles him to himself; that it makes him able to bear the sight of himself; and renders solitude and repose more agreeable to many, than all the intercourse and bustle of mankind. Nor is it by confining man's attention to himself, that it produces these wonderful effects. It is by bringing him to God, and by supporting him under the sense of his miseries, with the hope of a complete deliverance in a better life.

But for those who do not act above the principles of mere nature, it is impossible that they should exist in inactivity, and have leisure to contemplate themselves, without falling into chagrin and discontent. Man, who loves nothing but himself, hates nothing so much as to be left by himself. He seeks nothing but for himself, and yet avoids nothing more than himself; because when he looks within, he does not see himself such as he could wish; discovering in himself only a store of inevitable miseries, and a destitution of all real and solid good, which it is beyond his ability to replenish.

PASCAL.

Thou when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and shut the door. And the rea-

son is plain. He who would pray, must first retire. The spirit of the world and the spirit of prayer are contrary the one to the other; and experience will teach any one that he cannot well pray in a crowd. Business, or pleasure, or even common conversation, if it be about the things of this world, and continue for any long time, will strangely indispose the mind for devotion; and the soul, before she can take her flight to heaven, must plume and balance her wings by holy meditation. She must rally her scattered and dissipated thoughts, and fix them on the business she is going about. She must consider the nature of God, to whom she is to pray; of herself who is to pray to him; and of those things for which she is to pray to him. She must know the sins she has been guilty of, to confess them; and the graces she stands in need of, to petition for them. All this is not to be done but by deep meditation; and meditation, which is the mother of devotion, is the daughter of retirement. They who do not meditate, cannot pray; and they who do not retire, can do neither. God help and have mercy on all those who are in this most wretched and deplorable state! as all must be, who pass their days in a senseless round of vain amusements and diversions, in a continual hurry and dissipation of thought, ignorant of the benefits and comforts of the closet, and therefore ignorant of the true state of their minds, ignorant of their Saviour, ignorant of their duty, ignorant of every thing which they were sent into the world to learn. Thus they live, and—thus they die! If, therefore, we conceive a dread of such a life and such a death (and too great a dread we cannot conceive), let us learn of holy Daniel, to commune with our own heart, and with God, in our chamber. And then let us judge ourselves to have made some progress in the divine life, when the pleasures we find there are preferred, as every experienced Christian knows they ought to be preferred, to all the pleasures the world can offer.

BR. HORNE.

Pleasure and Profit of Religious Retirement.

It hath been ever a main obstruction to the practice of piety, that it hath been taken for no friend, or rather for an enemy, to profit; as both unprofitable and prejudicial to its followers; and many semblances

there are countenancing that opinion. For religion seemeth to smother or to slacken the industry and alacrity of men in following profit, many ways : by charging them to be content with a little, and careful for nothing ; by diverting their affections and cares from worldly affairs to matters of another nature, place and time, prescribing, in the first place, to seek things spiritual, heavenly and future ; by disparaging all secular wealth, as a thing in comparison to virtue and spiritual goods, very mean and inconsiderable ; by checking greedy desires and aspiring thoughts after it ; by debarring the most ready ways of getting it, (violence, exaction, fraud, and flattery,) yea, straightening the best ways, eager care and diligence ; by commending strict justice in all cases, and always taking part with conscience when it clasheth with interest ; by paring away the largest uses of wealth, in the prohibition of its free enjoyment to pride or pleasure ; by enjoying liberal communication thereof in ways of charity and mercy ; by engaging men to expose their goods sometimes to imminent hazard, sometimes to certain loss ; obliging them to forsake all things, and to embrace poverty for its sake. . . .

But voiding which prejudices, I shall propose some of those innumerable advantages, by considering which the immense profitableness of piety will appear. . . .

Piety doth virtually comprise within it all other profits, serving all the designs of them all : whatever kind of desirable good we can hope to find from any other profit, we may be assured to enjoy from it.

He that hath it is *ipso facto* vastly rich, is entitled to immense treasures of most precious wealth ; in comparison whereto, all the gold and all the jewels in the world are mere baubles. He hath interest in God, and can call him his, who is the *all*, and in regard to whom all things existent are less than nothing. The infinite power and wisdom of God belong to him, to be ever, upon all fit occasions, employed for his benefit. All the inestimable treasures of heaven are his, after this moment of life, to have and to hold for ever ; so that great reason had the wise man to say, that *In the house of the righteous is much treasure*. Piety therefore is profitable, as immediately instating in wealth : and whereas the desired fruits of profit are chiefly these—honour, power, pleasure, safety, liberty, ease, opportunity of getting

knowledge, means of benefiting others ; all these we shall see do abundantly accrue from piety, and, in truth, only from it.

The pious man is in truth most *honourable*. ‘*Inter homines pro summo est optimus*,’ saith Seneca ; whom Solomon translated thus, *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*. He is dignified by the most illustrious titles ; a son of God, a friend and favourite to the Sovereign King of the World, an heir of Heaven, a denizen of the Jerusalem above ; titles far surpassing all those which worldly state doth assume. He is approved by the best and most infallible judgments, wherein true honour resideth. He is respected by God himself, by the holy angels, by the blessed saints, by all good and all wise persons, yea, commonly by all men ; for the effects of genuine piety are so venerable and amiable, that scarce any man can do otherwise than in his heart much esteem him that worketh them.

The pious man is also the most *potent* man. He hath a kind of omnipotency, because he can do whatever he will, that is, what he ought to do ; and, because the Divine Power is ever ready to assist him in his pious enterprises, so that *He can do all things by Christ that strengtheneth him*. He is able to combat and vanquish him that is *the stout and mighty one* ; to wage war with happy success *against principalities and powers*. He conquereth and commandeth himself, which is the bravest victory, and noblest empire : he quellerh fleshly lusts, subdueth inordinate passions, and repelleth strong temptations. He, *by his faith, overcometh the world* with a conquest far more glorious than ever any Alexander or Cæsar could do. He, in fine, doth perform the most worthy exploits, and deserveth the most honourable triumphs that man can do.

The pious man also doth enjoy the only true, pure, and durable *pleasures* ; such pleasures as those of which the divine Psalmist singeth, *In thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*. That *all joy in believing*, that *quiety of hope*, that incessant *rejoicing in the Lord*, and *greatly delighting in his law*, that continual feast of a good conscience, that *serving the Lord with gladness*, that *exceeding gladness with God's countenance*, that *comfort of the Holy Spirit*, that *joy unspeakable and full of glory* ; the satisfaction resulting

from the contemplation of heavenly truth, from the sense of God's favour, and the pardon of his sins, from the influence of God's grace, from the hopes and anticipation of everlasting bliss; these are pleasures indeed, in comparison whereto all other pleasures are no more than sordid impurities, superficial touches, transient flashes of delight; such as should be insipid and unsavoury to a rational appetite; such as are tinctured with sourness and bitterness, have painful remorses or qualms consequent. All the pious man's performances of duty and of devotion are full of pure satisfaction and delight here; they shall be rewarded with perfect and endless joy hereafter.

As for *safety*, the pious man hath it most absolute and sure; he being guarded by Almighty power and wisdom; *resting under the shadow of God's wings*; God *upholding him with his hand, ordering his steps so that none of them shall slide, holding his soul in life, and suffering not his feet to be moved*; he being, by the grace and mercy of God, secured from the assaults and impressions of all enemies, from sin, and guilt, from the devil, world, and flesh, from death and hell, which are our most formidable, and in effect, only dangerous enemies.

As for *liberty*, the pious man most entirely and truly doth enjoy that; he alone is free from captivity to that cruel tyrant Satan, from the miserable slavery to sin, from the grievous dominion of lust and passion. He can do what he pleaseth, having a mind to do only what is good and fit. The law he observeth is worthily called *the perfect law of liberty*; the Lord he serveth pretendeth only to command free men and friends: *Ye are my friends*, said he, *if ye do whatever I command you*; and *if the Son set you free, then are ye free indeed*.

And for *ease*, it is he only that knoweth it; having his mind exempted from the distraction of care, from disorder of passion, from anguish of conscience, from the drudgeries and troubles of the world, from the vexations and disquiet which sin produceth. He findeth that made good to him, which our Lord inviting him did promise, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*. He feeleth the truth of those Divine assertions, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose*

mind is stayed on thee; and *great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them*.

As for *knowledge*, the pious man alone doth attain it considerably, so as to become truly wise, and learned to purpose. *Evil men*, saith the wise man himself, who knew well, *understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things*. It is the pious man that employeth his mind upon the most proper and worthy objects, that knoweth things which certainly best deserve to be known, that hath his soul enriched with the choicest notions; he skilleth to aim at the best ends, and to compass them by the fittest means; he can assign to each thing its due worth and value; he can prosecute things by the best methods, and order his affairs in the best manner: so that he is sure not to be defeated or disappointed in his endeavours, nor to mis-spend his care and pains, without answerable fruit. He hath the best Master to instruct him in his studies, and the best rules to direct him in his proceedings; he cannot be mistaken, seeing in his judgment and choice of things he conspireth with infallible wisdom. Therefore *ὁ εὐσεβῶν ἀκρῶς φιλοσοφεῖ*, 'the pious man is the exquisite philosopher.' *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. The fear of the Lord, as is said again and again in Scripture, is the head, or top of wisdom. A good understanding have all they that keep his commandments*.

Farther, the pious man is enabled and disposed, hath the power and the heart, most to benefit and to oblige others. He doth it by his succour and assistance, by his instruction and advice, which he is ever ready to yield to any man upon fit occasion: he doth it by the direction and encouragement of his good example; he doth it by his constant and earnest prayers for all men; he doth it by drawing down blessings from heaven on the place where he resideth. He is upon all accounts the most true, the most common Benefactor to mankind; all his neighbours, his country, the world, are in some way or other obliged to him: at least, he doeth all the good he can, and in wish doth benefit all men.

Thus all the fruits and consequences of profit, the which engage men so eagerly to pursue it, do in the best kind and high-

est degree, result from piety, and, indeed, only from it.

DR. BARROW.

What our Meditations often are, and what they ought to be.

O THE carnal and unprofitable thoughts of men! We all meditate; one, how to do ill to others; another, how to do some earthly good to himself; another, to hurt himself under a colour of good, as how to accomplish his lewd desires, the fulfilling whereof proveth the bane of the soul; how he may sin unseen, and go to hell with the least noise of the world. Or, perhaps, some better minds bend their thoughts upon the search of natural things; the motions of every star; the reason and course of the ebbing and flowing of the sea; the manifold kinds of simples that grow out of the earth, and creatures that creep upon it, with all their strange qualities and operations; or perhaps the several forms of government and rules of state take up their busy heads; so that, while they would be acquainted with the whole world, they are strangers at home, and, while they seek to know all other things, they remain unknown of themselves. The God who made them, the vileness of their nature, the danger of their sins, the multitude of their imperfections, the Saviour that bought them, the heaven that he bought for them, are, in the mean time, as unknown, as unregarded, as if they were not. Thus do foolish children spend their time and labour in turning over leaves to look for painted babes, not at all respecting the solid matter under their hands. We fools, when will we be wise; and, turning our eyes from vanity, with that sweet singer of Israel, make God's statutes our song and meditation in the house of our pilgrimage? Earthly things proffer themselves with importunity—heavenly things must with importunity be sued to. Those, if they were not so little worth, would not be so forward, and, being forward, need not any meditation to solicit them; these, by how much more hard they are to intreat, by so much more precious they are being obtained, and therefore worthier our endeavour. As then we cannot go amiss, so long as we keep ourselves in the track of divinity, while the soul is taken up with the thoughts either of the Deity in his essence and persons, (sparingly yet in this point, and more in faith and admiration than inquiry) or of his at-

tributes, his justice, power, wisdom, mercy, truth; or of his works, in the creation, preservation, government of all things; according to the Psalmist, *I will meditate of the beauty of thy glorious Majesty, and thy wonderful works*: so, most directly in our way, and best fitting our exercise of meditation, are those matters in divinity, which can most of all work compunction in the heart, and most stir us up to devotion. Of which kind are the meditations concerning Christ Jesus our Mediator, his incarnation, miracles, life, passion, burial, resurrection, ascension, intercession, the benefit of our redemption, the certainty of our election, the graces and proceeding of our sanctification, our glorious estate in paradise lost in our first parents, our present vileness, our inclination to sin, our several actual offences, the temptations and sleights of evil angels, the use of the sacraments, nature and practice of faith and repentance, the miseries of our life with the frailty of it, the certainty and uncertainty of our death, the glory of God's saints above, the awfulness of judgment, the terrors of hell, and the rest of this quality; wherein both it is fit to have variety, for that even the strongest stomach doth not always delight in one dish, and yet so to change, that our choice may be free from wildness and inconstancy. BP. HALL.

Scripture Truths, when they do not enrich the Memory may still purify the Heart.

WE must not measure the benefit we receive of the word according to what of it remains, but according to what effect it leaves behind. Lightning, than which nothing sooner vanisheth away, yet often breaks and melts the hardest and most firm bodies in its sudden passage. Such is the irresistible force of the word: the Spirit often darts it through us: it seems but like a flash, and gone; and yet it may break and melt down our hard hearts before it, when it leaves no impression at all upon our memories. I have heard of one, who, returning from an affecting sermon, highly commended it to some; and, being demanded what he remembered of it, answered, 'Truly, I remember nothing at all; but only, while I heard it, it made me resolve to live better than ever I have done; and so, by God's grace, I will.' Here was now a sermon lost to the memory, but not to the affections. To the

same purpose, I have somewhere read a story of one, who complained to an aged holy man, that he was much discouraged from reading the Scripture, because his memory was so slippery, that he could fasten nothing upon it which he read. The old hermit (for so as I remember he was described) bid him take an earthen pitcher, and fill it with water; when he had done it, he bid him empty it again, and wipe it clean, that nothing should remain in it; which when the other had done, and wondered to what this tended, 'Now,' saith he, 'though there be nothing of the water remaining in it, yet the pitcher is cleaner than it was before: so, though thy memory retain nothing of the word thou readest, yet thy heart is the cleaner for its very passage through.'

Affection to the truths which we read or hear, makes the memory retentive of them. Most men's memories are like jet, or electrical bodies, that attract and hold fast only straws or feathers, or such vain and light things. Discourse to them of the affairs of the world, or some idle and romantic story, their memories retain this as faithfully as if it were engraven on leaves of brass; whereas the great and important truths of the Gospel, the great mysteries of heaven and concerns of eternity, leave no more impression upon them, than words on the air in which they are spoken. Whence is this, but only that the one sort work themselves into the memory through the interest they have got in the affections, which the other cannot do? Had we but the same delight in heavenly objects, did we but receive the truth in the love of it, and mingle it with faith in the hearing, this would fix that volatileness and flittiness of our memories, and make every truth as indelible as it is necessary.

BP. HOPKINS.

To be wary in our walk with God, the soul must daily take account of itself.

THAT conscience alone is good which is much busied in this work, in demanding and answering, which speaks much with itself, and much with God. This is both the sign that it is good, and the means to make it better. That soul will doubtless be very wary in its walk, which takes daily account of itself, and renders up that account unto God. It will not live by guess, but naturally examine each step beforehand, because it is resolved to examine all after; will consider well what it should do, because it means to ask over again what it hath done, and not only to answer itself, but to make a faithful report of all unto God; to lay all before him continually, upon trial made; to tell him what is in any measure well done, as his own work, and bless him for that; and tell him, too, all the slips and miscarriages of the day, as our own; complaining of ourselves in his presence, and still entreating free pardon, and more wisdom to walk more holily and exactly, and gaining, even by our failings, more humility and more watchfulness. If you would have your consciences answer well, they must inquire and question much beforehand. Whether is this I purpose and go about, agreeable to my Lord's will? Will it please him? Ask that more, and regard that more, than this, which the most follow. Will it please or profit myself? Fits that my own humour? And examine not only the bulk and substance of thy ways and actions, but the manner of them, how thy heart is set. So, think it not enough to go to church, or to pray, but *take heed how ye hear*; for, consider how pure he is, and how piercing his eye, whom thou servest.

LEIGHTON.

PART III.—EXPERIMENTAL.

SECTION I.—SOME CONSIDERATIONS SUITED TO VARIOUS CASES OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

Those who are Discouraged under a deep sense of internal Depravity, or prevalence of Sin in the Heart.

A DEEP sense of internal depravity, or the prevalency of sin in the heart, has often been very stumbling to serious Christians, who, on a view of their vileness, have been ready to conclude their cases are both singular and sad: says the discouraged soul, if I be a Christian, why am I thus?

It may be an advantage for such to reflect, that a soul-humbling sense of sin, and deep abasement before God, has been experienced by the most eminent saints recorded in Scripture, as is evident from the language they have used on the subject of self-description, saying, *Behold, I am vile, I abhor myself. I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips. I blush to look up to heaven: I am as a beast before thee. Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. I am carnal, and sold under sin. I find a law in my members warring against the law in my mind, leading me into captivity. Iniquities prevail against me. Evil is present with me. I cannot do the things that I would. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me? We are all as an unclean thing.* These, with many more instances which might be produced, demonstrate, that true believers, and they only, are properly acquainted with the plague of their own hearts. Why then should the Christian be discouraged through feeling himself to be, what those who were eminent for godliness have with shame and sorrow acknowledged they were? Besides, have you not repeatedly entreated the Lord to search and try you, to discover what was in your hearts? And shall you now be stumbled and discour-

aged because he has heard and answered your prayers? And as God has given you an experience, similar to what was once the case of those who are now the subjects of spotless purity and perpetual praise, is it reasonable to conclude from thence that you are not the subjects of a gracious change? You may rather infer, that if the Lord had been pleased to have slain you, he would not have shewn you such things as these. Remember, *the whole need not a physician, but those that are sick*; and grace has made rich provision for healing all the diseases and maladies of the mind. Perhaps every good man will at least account himself, of all others, the most indebted to God and grace; for he feels that in himself which he does not certainly know is in any other, for every heart only knows its own bitterness. By such experiences, the Lord is training his people for the future glory. For, accounting themselves, as St. Paul did, *the chief of sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15, their own salvation will be the matter of eternal wonder, every one viewing his own deliverance as the effect of a peculiar exertion of Divine power, and an uncommon display of rich superabounding grace; being each under infinite deficiency, respecting their personal endeavours to extol the great Jehovah. Mutual assistance will be entreated in the work of praise; for the language of the redeemed of the Lord to fellow-saints frequently is, *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together*, Psalm xxxiv. 3. Go on, then, ye blessed of the Lord, pressing after the full possession of that salvation which you see the absolute need of, even a complete deliverance from sin, as well as from sorrow; that grace which has rendered sin loathsome, and Christ lovely in your view, is sufficient for you; in a perpetual dependence on which, may you hold on your way with courage and caution, till you ar-

rive at Zion's celestial gate! *Then shall you obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away*; Isaiah xxxv. 10.
REV. ROB. HALL.

It becomes us to be humbled into the dust with a sense of indwelling sin; yet our grief, though it cannot be too great, may be under a wrong direction; and if it leads us into impatience or distrust, it certainly is so. Sin is the sickness of the soul, in itself mortal and incurable, as to any power in heaven or earth, but that of the Lord Jesus only. But he is the great, the infallible Physician. Have we the privilege to know his name? Have we been enabled to put ourselves into his hand? We have then no more to do but to attend his prescriptions, to be satisfied with his methods, and to wait his time. It is lawful to wish we were well; it is natural to *groan, being burdened*; but still he must and will take his own course with us; and however dissatisfied with ourselves, we ought still to be thankful that he has begun his work in us, and to believe that he will also make an end. Therefore, while we mourn, we should likewise rejoice; we should encourage ourselves to expect all that he has promised; and we should limit our expectations by his promises. We are sure that when the Lord delivers us from the guilt and dominion of sin, he could with equal ease free us entirely from sin, if he pleased. The doctrine of sinless perfection is not to be rejected as though it were a thing simply impossible in itself, for nothing is too hard for the Lord; but because it is contrary to that method by which he has chosen to proceed. He has appointed that sanctification should be effected, and sin mortified, not at once completely, but by little and little; and doubtless he has wise reasons for it. Therefore, though we are to desire a growth in grace, we should, at the same time, acquiesce in his appointment, and not despond or be discouraged because we feel that conflict which his word informs us will only terminate with our lives.

Some of the first prayers which the Spirit of God teaches us to put up, are for a clearer sense of the sinfulness of sin, and our vileness on account of it. Now, if the Lord be pleased to answer our prayers in this respect, though it will afford cause enough for humiliation, yet it should be received likewise with thankful-

ness, as a token for good. The heart is not worse than formerly, only our spiritual knowledge is increased; and this is no small part of the growth in grace for which we are thirsting, to be truly humbled, and emptied, and made little in our own eyes. It is by the experiences of evil within ourselves, and by feeling our utter insufficiency, either to perform duty or to withstand our enemies, that the Lord takes occasion to show us the suitableness, the sufficiency, the freeness, the unchangeableness, of his power and grace. Let us then be thankful and cheerful; and while we take shame to ourselves, let us glorify God by giving Jesus the honour due to his name. Though we are poor, he is rich; though we are weak, he is strong; though we have nothing, he possesses all things. He suffered for us; he calls us to be conformed to him in sufferings. He conquered in his own person, and he will make each of his members *more than conquerors* in due season. It is good to have not only our eye upon ourselves, but it should also be ever fixed on him, in whom we have righteousness, peace, and power. He can controul all that we fear; so that if our path should be through the fire or through the water, neither the flood should drown, nor the flame kindle upon us; and ere long, he will cut short our conflicts, and say, *Come up hither*. Having such promises and assurances, let us lift up our banner in his name, and press on through every discouragement.

REV. JOHN NEWTON.

We teach and comfort the afflicted sinner after this manner: Brother, it is not possible for thee to become so righteous in this life, that thou shouldst feel no sin at all, that thy body should be clear like the sun, without spot or blemish; but thou hast as yet wrinkles and spots, and yet art thou holy notwithstanding. But thou wilt say, How can I be holy, when I have and feel sin in me? I answer, In that thou dost feel and acknowledge thy sin, it is a good token; give thanks unto God, and despair not. It is one step of health when the sick man doth acknowledge and confess his infirmity. But how shall I be delivered from sin? Run to Christ the Physician, which healeth them that are broken in heart, and saveth sinners. Follow not the judgment of reason, which telleth thee, that he is angry with sinners;

but kill reason, and believe in Christ. If thou believe, thou art righteous, because thou givest glory unto God; that he is almighty, merciful, true, &c.; thou justifiest and praisest God. To be brief, thou yieldest unto him his divinity, and whatsoever else belongeth unto him; and the sin which remaineth in thee is not laid to thy charge, but is pardoned for Christ's sake in whom thou believest, who is perfectly just; whose righteousness is thy righteousness, and thy sin is his sin.

LUTHER.

Those who fear their Sins are too great to be forgiven.

PARDONING grace can as easily triumph in the remitting of great and many sins, as of few and small sins. What a great blot upon the heavens is a thick cloud! and yet the beams of the sun can pierce through that, and scatter it easily. Why, now, God will blot out our transgressions as a thick cloud; so himself tells us by the prophet, Isa. xlv. 12, *I will blot out thy transgressions as a cloud, and thine iniquities as a thick cloud.* A great debt may as easily be blotted out as a small one. Ten thousand talents is a great sum, yet it is as easily and freely forgiven by the great God, as a few pence. God proclaims himself to be a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; that is, sins of all sorts and sizes. The greatest sins repented of, are no more without the extent of Divine grace and mercy, than the least sins unrepented of, are without the cognisance of Divine justice. *Though your sins be as scarlet, yet shall they become as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, yet they shall be as wool,* Isaiah i. 18. And can there then be found a despairing soul in the world, when the great God hath thus magnified his grace and mercy above all his works—yea, and above all ours also? Say not then, O sinner, *My sins are greater than can be forgiven*; this is to stint and limit the grace of God, which he hath made boundless and infinite: and thou mayest with as much truth and reason say, thou art greater than God, as that thy sins are greater than his mercy. Of all things in the world, take heed that you be not injurious to rich grace, and to this free love and mercy, that pardons thee even for his own sake. God pardons thee for himself, or his own sake: and dost thou fear, O

penitent and believing soul, that ever he will condemn thee for thy sins? No, but as much as God and his mercy is greater than our sins, so much more reason will he find in himself to pardon the repenting believing sinner, than he can find reason in his sins to condemn him.

BR. HOPKINS.

The first observation that I would recommend to the notice of the distressed sinner, who is bowed down under an apprehension that his transgressions are too many, and too heinous to be forgiven, is the consideration of the nature and design of the blessed Gospel of Christ: I mean, that it is a system of pure grace and mercy, and altogether intended for the very character the poor self-condemned sinner finds himself to be. Nay, so very peculiarly directed to the sinner, and to him only, is the blessed Gospel of the Lord Jesus, that unless you are a sinner, you are not interested in its saving truths. For the great Author of it himself declared, that he came not to *call the righteous*, but *sinner to repentance*. And agreeably to this, in the Redeemer's first sermon which he preached in the synagogue at the opening of his commission, he proclaimed this, and this only, to be the grand object for which he was appointed; *to preach the Gospel to the poor; to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* Examine those characters one by one, and see whether they do not exactly come up to your case and circumstances. If the Gospel be to be preached to the poor, can any be more poor, more wretched, more deplorable in spirit than you? If Jesus be commissioned to heal the broken-hearted, is there one more broken-hearted than you? And if a state of sin and despair be represented under the image of a captive, bound and unable to come forth of himself from the prison, and Jesus declares that he came to preach deliverance to such a poor creature; will you not instantly cry out, Lord, I am he? Who can have been more blinded by sin than you? Or who more bruised in all the faculties of the soul? When Jesus, therefore, expressly declares, that the very object of his coming from above, was for the recovering of *sight*

to the blind, and for the setting at liberty them that are bruised; if your situation doth not correspond to the design of his commission, it is impossible to find a case that doth. The whole world is in a state of guilt and condemnation before God. And though some, from the pride and vanity of their own heart, may fancy themselves less so than others, yet if all the causes which prevent sin in one from being so great as in another, were taken away, it would be found that all are more upon a level than is supposed in this particular. So that strictly and properly speaking, there are but two different characters of sinners to be found among men. I mean such as are awakened to a sense of sin, and such as are not. As for the unawakened, they know not their corruptions before God, therefore they seek not for a cleansing from them; they are ignorant of what Christ is to the soul, and therefore his precious blood and righteousness is but little esteemed by them. And such a state of hardness, unconcern, and impenitency, if continued in to the end of life, deprives them of being partakers of the blessings of redemption. *If ye believe not* (says Christ) *that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.* John viii. 24. Hence, therefore, there is but one class of sinners more upon earth, and that is the class, my brother, to which you belong. The awakened, the convinced, the humble sinner; he particularly who is so convinced, so humbled, so broken-hearted, as to fear that he hath sinned beyond the power of redemption. And if such do not come within the promises of the Gospel, all the promises would then be vain. Then the precious blood of Christ would have been shed in vain: and after all the many gracious and exceeding great and precious promises, then would our faith be also vain, and every son and daughter of Adam would be yet in their sins. So that the very nature and design of the Gospel evidently proves for whom it is intended: and a plainer and more obvious truth cannot be found, that you are among the very persons to whom the word of this salvation is sent, than in those features of the mind which distinguish your character.

DR. HAWKER.

We see what sort of people Jesus invites to come to him, in order to make them partakers of the grace and gifts which he

received for them; persons in every respect miserable, and destitute of all hope of salvation. But we are also informed, that we cannot enjoy the blessings which Jesus Christ brings us, unless, being humbled under a real sense of our misery, we come to him as poor hungry souls, who seek him as our Deliverer. For such as are puffed up with pride, and neither groan under their captivity, nor seem dissatisfied with their blindness, have no ears to hear the Gospel, and despise it.

If we do but recollect that Jesus Christ came into this world to make us happy, and that for this cause he clothed himself with our flesh, shed his blood, finished the sacrifice of himself by his death, and descended into hell; we shall not think it strange, that he chooses to save such as are the vilest of the human race, and plunged into an abyss of wickedness. We may suppose, that a person whom we may look on with detestation, is unworthy of the grace of Christ. Why then was Jesus Christ himself made a curse, unless to stretch out his hand to poor and accursed sinners?

CALVIN.

Come to him, ye sinners, whoever ye are, *though your sins be as scarlet*, though your iniquities be of the blackest die; come, and he will pardon you. Tell me not of your age, your condition, your manners, or your nation; this *Lamb taketh away the sin of the world*. Are you of the human race, be you what you may in other respects, Gentile or Jew, Greek or Barbarian, bond or free, male or female, he will take away your sins. Fear not that they should exceed the power of his blood. This blood has a divine and infinite efficacy; it is the blood of the Lamb of God, *who is over all, God blessed for ever*; this blood will take away all your spots, however black and deep they may be. It will cleanse you from all your filthiness; it will purify you, and make you as white as snow, though your sins be as scarlet. Do not deceive yourselves with works and human inventions. You have the Lamb of God in the midst of you, the source of grace, the fountain of salvation. To whom will you go but to him? He *only hath the words of eternal life*. All those who keep at a distance from him shall perish; and all who forsake him shall be cut off. But as for us, it is our privilege to draw near to him. He hath all

things in abundance which are necessary for our happiness.

He became a Lamb for us; let us in truth become his sheep. He shed all his blood for our salvation; can we then be so ungrateful as to refuse him a few drops of ours, or, what is still much less, a few crumbs of bread, or a mite or two from our treasure, which he asks of us for his glory, and for the relief of our necessitous brethren? Ah! may he himself, by the power of his blood and Spirit, enable us to walk in all his commandments!

J. DAILLE.

Jesus has shed streams of blood, that grace might flow abundantly on us. Thou hast nothing now, O poor sinner, to fear, as soon as thou truly believest in Jesus Christ; go boldly to the throne of God, since Jesus died for thee. His blood washes away thy sins; his stripes heal thy diseases; his nails and thorns destroy the handwriting that was against thee; his nakedness arrays thee in fine linen, clean and white, even the righteousness of saints; his accusation by false witnesses secures thee from the just accusations of thy conscience; his condemnation before Pilate, is thy absolution before God, and thou mayest now cry out in full assurance, *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died*, and who by his death hath obtained eternal redemption for us. Nothing, I say nothing can any longer condemn us, since our Saviour hath died for us; if we embrace him with true faith, we have nothing more to fear. For what should we fear? Is it sin, of which we are conscious? But Jesus having been delivered for our offences, our sins are no longer ours, but his who took them upon himself, and bare them; they are pardoned crimes, iniquities that are blotted out, debts that are paid, which God, the Sovereign Creditor, has erased from his book, with a view neither to trouble us on their account, nor to make any further demands upon us.

Du Bosc.

Those who despair of Mercy.

THERE cannot be an act more opposite to faith than to fear distrustfully, to despair in fearing: none more injurious either to God or our own souls: for surely, as Cyril well says, 'The wickedness of our offences to God cannot exceed his goodness toward us:' the praise whereof from

his creature he affects and esteems so highly, as if he cared not, in any other notion, to be apprehended by us; proclaiming himself no otherwise in the mount, than, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin*; adding only one word, to prevent our too much presumption, *that will by no means clear the guilty*, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7: which to do, were a mere contradiction to his justice. Of all other, therefore, God hates most to be robbed of this part of his glory. Neither is the wrong done to God more palpable, than that which is done herein unto ourselves, in barring the gates of heaven upon our souls, in breaking open the gates of hell to take them in, and, in the mean time, striving to make ourselves miserable, whether God will or no. And, surely, as our experience tells us concerning the estate of our bodily indispositions, that there is more frequent sickness in summer, but more deadly in winter, so we find it here: other sins and spiritual distempers are more common, but this distrustful fear and despair of mercy, which chills the soul with a cold horror, is more mortal.

For the remedy whereof, it is requisite that the heart should be thoroughly convinced of the superabundant and ever-ready mercy of the Almighty; of the infallible and unfailable truth of all his gracious engagements; and, in respect of both, be made to confess, that heaven can never be but open to the penitent. It is a sweet word and a true one of St. Bernard, 'In thy book, O Lord, are written all that do what they can, though they cannot do what they ought.' Neither doth God admit only, but he invites, but he entreats, but he importunes men to be saved. What could he do more, unless he would offer violence to the will, which were no other than to destroy it, and so to undo the best piece of his own workmanship? It is the way of his decree and proceedings to dispose of all things sweetly; neither is it more against our nature, than his, to force his own ends; and when he sees that fair means will not prevail to win us from death, he is pleased feelingly to bemoan it, as his own loss: *Why will ye die, O house of Israel?* As for the stable truth of his promises, it is so everlasting, that heaven and earth, in their vanishing,

shall leave it standing fast: his title is, *Amen*; and, *Faithful is he that hath promised, who will also do it*. His very essence can no more fail, than his word. He who fears, therefore, that God will be less than his promise, let him fear that God will cease to be himself. It was the motto of the wise and learned Doctor Donne, the late dean of St. Paul's, which I have seen more than once, written in Spanish with his own hand, 'Blessed be God, that he is God:' divinely, like himself: as the being of God is the ground of all his blessed ascriptions, so of all our firmitude, safety, consolation; since the veracity and truth of God, as his other holy attributes, are no other than his eternal essence. Fear not, therefore, O thou weak soul, that the Almighty can be wanting to himself in failing thee. He is Jehovah, and his counsels shall stand. Fear and blame thine own wretched infirmities. But the more weak thou art in thyself, be so much the stronger in thy God: by how much more thou art tempted to distrust, cling so much the closer to the Author and Finisher of thy salvation.

BP. HALL.

It is not thy having lain long under sin, or long under terrors and despairs; it is not thy having sinned often under many enlightenings, that can hinder thee from being saved by Christ. Do but remember this same word, *To the uttermost*, and then put in what exception thou wilt or canst.

REV. IS. AMBROSE.

God condescends to receive us after we have tried every thing else, and after every thing else has failed us, and though he knows we should not have returned to him, if every thing had not failed us.

MRS. H. MORE.

All that his saving grace falls on, are lost and undone sinners, men at the very brink of hell. Who could be lower, viler, and baser, except they that be in hell itself, than the Ephesians, as recorded in chap. ii. 1—3; and yet in such a case and condition, grace made its first visit to them. The Apostle Peter encouraged such men to come to the throne of grace, who, if ever any in the world should have been kept back, it should have been they; a crew of the murderers of the Son of God, for they had slain the heir and foundation of all the promises; they had done as

much as men could do to forfeit all interest in the promise, and yet Peter still invites them to the throne of grace, by an interest yet in the promise.

REV. R. TRAILL.

In these lists of detestable criminals, (1 Cor. vi. 9—11,) we perceive sinners of every class: some that were monsters in wickedness, who consequently could have no moral worth to plead as a ground of forgiveness, and yet their filthy souls were washed in the atoning blood of Christ—were justified by his righteousness—sanctified by his Spirit, and made meet for the enjoyment of Heaven. Surely such striking instances of the aboundings of grace over the aboundings of sin, must constrain us to acknowledge that Christ is able and willing to save to the uttermost.

AUTHOR OF THE REFUGE.

Whatever view we take of the character of Christ, we see love to man exemplified in every action, and in every conversation of his life. He was born, he lived, he died for sinners. And whatever sin may suggest to the contrary, whatever our corrupt nature may plead in opposition, whatever doubts unbelief may raise against it, whatever the enemy of souls may craftily insinuate to deter us from accepting the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; this *great salvation*, is offered to sinners, and this merciful Saviour may be their Saviour.

REV. H. DAVY.

Those who are discouraged on account of their relapses into Sin or general back-slidings.

Christ is able to save those who have frequently relapsed into the commission of the same sin. This is that, I know, which galls and stings the consciences of many sinners; it is not so much the multitude of their sins that affright them, as the frequent commission of the same sins. Oh! saith one, I am guilty of reiterated and oft-repeated sins, I have committed the same sin again and again, notwithstanding I have been convinced of it, notwithstanding I have prayed, resolved, and vowed against it, notwithstanding all the convictions and overtures I have had; and notwithstanding all the resolutions I have made, I have again relapsed into the same sins, and those not of ordinary infirmity and human frailty, but sins of gross and scandalous nature; and are such sins pardonable?

I answer, They are. These relapses, although they are very dangerous, yet they are not altogether incurable. It is hard to soften a heart that is treacherous to God and to itself, and very deeply engaged in some particular lust, when we are frequently overcome by the same corruption, by the same temptation, but yet this is not such an aggravation as should leave our sins unpardonable, or us desperate. The Jews, indeed, have a tradition among them, that the fourth relapse into the same sin makes it an unpardonable offence, but we know the mercy of God, and the infinite merit of Christ, are not stinted by any number of sins, nor by any number of the same sins. Certainly, that Christ who bids us to forgive our brother, though he should offend us to *seventy times seven* offences, and hath not excepted reiterated provocations, will, upon our repentance, so much oftener forgive us, as his great mercy is above our charity. Though we have committed those sins and provocations against himself, though it be matter of bitter and deep humiliation that any corruption should be so prevalent as frequently to overcome us, and notwithstanding conviction, contrition, and heart-breaking confession, yet it is no cause of despair of mercy, yet the grace of Christ can subdue such rooted sinners as these. And what sins soever the grace of Christ can subdue, the mercy of God can pardon.

Christ *can* save the profoundest and most notorious backslider. And it is the greatest obstruction to a sinner's hope; this is that which fills him with fears and terrors. Oh! I have been so guilty of apostacy, I have tasted of the sweetness of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come, yet I have fallen back to my carnal temper from the holy ways of God, and have again backslided and wallowed in my former pollutions, from which I seemed sometimes to be cleansed and refined:—and is this apostacy pardonable?

I answer, there is indeed an unpardonable apostacy, described in that dreadful place, Heb. vi. 4. It is impossible for such a one to be renewed by repentance, &c. This is the same with *the sin against the Holy Ghost*; and this no man is guilty of but he that hath cast off all means tending to salvation and eternal life, and all desires after it. There is also an apostacy from great attainments both of gifts

and graces. When a man's zeal to God's glory cools, when his vigour in holy duties faints, when his relish to spiritual objects vitiates, and he returns to a lukewarm and indifferent temper, and it may be to a sinful and wicked life; this, though it be very sad and dreadful, yet the man is both pardonable and recoverable. See that most comfortable place, Jer. iii. 22. *Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.*

I shall not instance in any other aggravations which makes sin out of measure sinful, and makes the sinner out of measure dangerous, since, if the relapsing, if the apostatizing sinner be pardonable and saveable, there is none then have reason to exclude themselves from the hopes of eternal life. Indeed the only danger is, lest the wickedness of men abuse this most comfortable doctrine, and turn that into presumption, which is only intended to arm them against despair. Indeed, both presumption and despair do tend in divers manners to engage and harden men in sin. The despairing person judgeth—if I must not be saved, if my sins are such as that there is no pardon for them, to what purpose do I then live strictly, and vex, and cross myself, and perplex my life? I will let loose the reins, and enjoy myself, and reap as great a crop as I can of pleasure, and if I must to hell, I will make the way as delightful as I can. And the argument on the other side, that encourageth and hardeneth the presumptuous sinner is this, Christ is able to save to the uttermost the vilest sinners; we hear no sins are beyond his all-sufficiency to save, therefore, say they, what need we trouble ourselves to repent and reform, we will yet a while indulge ourselves in sin, for the efficacy of Christ is able to save in the last moment of our lives, as after many years' preparations. We see iniquity every where fearfully abounding; and though we use to say Despair kills its thousands, and Presumption its ten thousands, yet if we narrowly consider, possibly it may be found that this kind of despair in men, arising from sloth and carelessness, is as great a source of impiety as presumption. Whence else is it that many who are convinced, and their consciences blackened with the sense of wrath, persist still to add iniquity to iniquity, but because they think that there is no salvation for them, that their

doom is fixed, and that their state is determined; and therefore since they must pay so dear as eternal damnation, they are resolved to make up their pennyworths in their present pleasures of sin, like those in Jer. xviii. 12: *And they said, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart?* I should judge it one of the most conducive means to promote men's endeavours after godliness, if I could but bring them to a serious and settled belief that their salvation is attainable; for certainly so good a thing as salvation is, it cannot but stir up affections and industry proportionable to our apprehensions of the valuableness of it. Hence then to tell men what great sins Christ can pardon, what great sinners he can save is no encouragement to presumption, but rather to the exercise of holiness; for since the way to heaven is cleared from impossibilities, it is most unreasonable for men to stick at difficulties; but if any abuse this doctrine of *Christ's all-sufficiency to save the greatest sinners*, to sloth, and the support of their wickedness, promising themselves peace and happiness in the end, though they go on in sin presumptuously, adding iniquity to iniquity, let me only tell them (and it will be enough to damp all their vain hopes) that though Christ be able to save to the uttermost, yet he is not able to save them in their sins, but only from their sins. BP. HOPKINS.

Those who fear to apply to Christ from a sense of unworthiness.

If you make a diligent search through all the Scripture, you will not find one word that speaks out God's requiring any worthiness in the creature before the soul's believing in Christ; before the soul's leaning and resting upon Christ for happiness and blessedness; and why then should that be a bar or hinderance to your faith, which God does no where require of you before you come to Christ, *that you may have life?* Satan objects your unworthiness against you, only out of a design to keep Christ and your souls asunder for ever; and therefore in the face of all your unworthiness, rest upon Christ, come to Christ, believe in Christ; and you are happy for ever.

Consider that none ever received Christ, embraced Christ, and obtained mercy and pardon from Christ, but unworthy souls.

What worthiness was in Matthew, Zachæus, Mary Magdalene, Manasseh, Paul, and Lydia, before their coming to Christ, before their faith in Christ? Surely none. Christ has bestowed the choicest mercies, the greatest favours, the highest dignities, the sweetest privileges, upon unworthy sinners; and therefore do not faint, do not despair; but patiently and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. Who can tell but that free grace and mercy may shine forth upon us, though we are unworthy, and give us a portion among those worthies that are now triumphing in heaven.

If the soul will keep off from Christ till it be worthy, it will never close with Christ; it will never embrace Christ; it will never be *one with Christ*; it must lie down in everlasting sorrow. God has laid up all worthiness in Christ, that the creature may know where to find it, and may make out after it. There is no way on earth to make unworthy souls worthy, but by believing in Christ. Believing in Christ, of slaves, will make you worthy sons; of enemies, it will make you worthy friends. God will count none worthy but believers, who are made worthy by the worthiness of Christ's person, righteousness, satisfaction, and intercession.

If you make a diligent search into your own hearts, you will find that it is the pride and folly of your own hearts, that put you upon bringing a worthiness to Christ. You would fain bring something to Christ that might render you acceptable to him; you are loath to come empty-handed. The Lord cries, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?* Isa. lv. 1, 2. Here the Lord calls upon moneyless, upon unworthy souls, to come and partake of his precious favours freely; but sinners are proud and foolish, and because they have no money, no worthiness to bring, they will not come, though he sweetly invites them.

REV. T. BROOKES.

There are some that are specially welcome to Christ, and speed well at this throne of grace. As,

They that come when they can do no-

thing else ; they that come to the throne of grace as their last shift : *We know not what to do, but our eyes are upon thee*, said Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 12. Sincerest believing, and strongest believing, is acted, when a man hath no prop at all to lean upon, but God alone. Believing is called *fleeing* : *We have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us*, Heb. vi. 18. Now, who flees ? Only he that can stand no longer, that is not able to deal with his adversary and danger, that hath no hope of prevailing by his strength, and therefore betakes himself to his heels. It is men's great sin to endeavour to seek that elsewhere, that only is to be found here, mercy and grace : but it is the greatest sin of all, to count all lost, as long as this throne stands, and the Lord calls men to come to it. Be deeply humbled, and covered with shame ; yet come notwithstanding. Such is the corruption of our hearts, and the Lord seeth it well, that if sinners could find grace and mercy any where else, they would never come to the throne of grace for it. Christ is the last shift of a distressed sinner ; yet, blessed be his name, he welcomes the comer. The woman, Mark v. 25-35, tries many means ere she comes to Christ, yet sped well when she came at last. REV. R. TRAILL.

When God is pleased to call some to his church, and to the enjoyment of salvation, in preference to others, we are by no means to infer, that he saw in them a better disposition and preparation for grace ; that they had made a better use of the light they had, and of their natural faculties ; or that they had led a more virtuous and moral life, by which God was moved to impart unto them the supernatural graces, and the divine, saving light of faith. Oh no ! His gracious call finds us neither disposed, nor prepared to receive it. On the contrary, it finds us in a wretched condition, with our understandings darkened, our wills deplorably perverted, our affections dreadfully confused, and all the faculties of our souls abominably corrupted and depraved. When God, therefore, turns to us in love, and betrothes us unto himself for ever, in loving-kindness and in mercies ; it is not on account of any excellence, which he perceives in our persons. Thus you see in the most distinguished calls of God, recorded in the holy Scriptures, that he has

been pleased to call men who were in the most wretched situation possible.

What was Abraham, when God called him to be the father of all the faithful, and the root of the lineage from which the Saviour of the world descended ? He was, probably, an idolater, plunged in the abominations of his fathers. Josh. xxiv. 2.

What was St. Matthew, when Jesus Christ called him and conferred his grace on him ? He was a publican, an extortioner, a public servant of the system of tyranny and oppression. He was just then engaged in the performance of this odious profession, sitting at the receipt of custom, in his iniquitous office, when Jesus favoured him with one of those gracious looks, which instantly conveyed holiness into the heart.

What was Mary Magdalene, when Jesus converted her ? She was possessed of seven devils, a habitation of unclean spirits, a living hell.

What was St. Paul, when Jesus spoke to him in his way to Damascus ? He was a roaring lion, a furious wild boar, a ravenous tiger, thirsting after the blood of believers, and breathing out threatenings and slaughter ; he was in the very act of destroying the church of Christ, he was hastening to massacre, with a heart filled with rage, a mouth full of blasphemies, provided with chains and instruments of death. At that very time, and under those dreadful circumstances, Christ made him sensible of his call, and took him as a chosen vessel unto himself. Du Bosq.

Those who are discouraged from applying to Christ, till proof of an interest in him appear.

It is frequently asserted, that a true faith in Christ is inseparably connected with the knowledge of an interest in him, or that there can be no proper believing in Jesus without considering him as a person's own : this has proved a stumbling-block to many ; for as common sense suggests the absolute necessity of *evidence*, in order to support a *claim*, and the soul *before* it goes to Christ, not having that evidence, therefore is discouraged from applying to him, till *proof* of an interest in him appear. Labouring in vain for marks and signs, as evidences of their belonging to Christ, in order to warrant or encourage their application to him, they conclude there is no hope, they are none of his chosen

and redeemed, &c. But there is no doctrine contained in the Gospel, nor even any threatening in the law of God, which is in its own nature a bar to an undone sinner's coming to Christ for salvation. Their right to come to Christ does not in the least depend upon, or arise from, a *prior* knowledge of *interest* in special blessings, or *feeling* themselves the subjects of supernatural principles. Such knowledge, such experience, is impossible to be obtained, but in consequence of believing in or receiving Jesus the Saviour; for *he who believeth not* is declaratively under condemnation, *the wrath of God abideth on him*. To attempt, therefore, to define, as some do, who ought and who ought not to return to God by Christ, is daring presumption, and tends to discourage, and rivet the fetters of guilt, where a sense of meanness and misery prevails, and encourages self-righteousness, by establishing the idea of previous fitness in order to salvation.

If any one should ask, Have I a right to apply to Jesus the Saviour, simply as a poor, undone, perishing sinner, in whom there appears no good thing? I answer, Yes; the Gospel proclamation is, *Whosoever will, let him come*, Rev. xxii. 17. *To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men*, Prov. viii. 4. The way to Jesus is graciously laid open for every one who chooses to come to him. His arms of mercy are expanded to receive the coming soul. Fear not, poor sinner, to approach him; he will not, on any account, cast thee out, John vi. 37. He does not receive with reluctance; no, it is his joy; it is his delight to *save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him*. Consider, the painful work of salvation is now with him for ever over. His endearing invitations to poor heavily-laden sinners, his melting expostulations with them, and gracious reception of them, are left on record, as the warrant, and for the encouragement, of sinners; therefore, the worst of such, even the vilest of the vile, may come and apply to him for salvation from sin and sorrow. However remote you are, however great the distance from him, he kindly invites you to view him as the Almighty Saviour; saying, *Behold me! Behold me!* Isa. lxxv. 1. *Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved, for I am God, and there is none else*, Isa. xlii. 22. The gracious grant is indefinite, the way to Jesus is open and free for *whosoever will*, without exception; nothing

that God has done, or said, is in its nature an obstacle. None can in truth say they desire salvation, but may not apply for it, or cannot attain it. To infer that personal unworthiness, or any Scriptural doctrine, is a bar in their way to Jesus, is either the effect of strong temptations, or owing to the want of attention to the grace of God, displayed in the Gospel. There is no preventive bar in the sinner's way to the Saviour, but what ariseth from a carnal heart; such as, impenitency for sin, an attachment to self-righteousness, and an avowed aversion to the holy perfections of God, and his sovereign methods of grace. But let it be observed, that a *grant* to come to Christ does not support a *claim*, or give a right to conclude they shall be saved by him. No, such a conclusion is only inferible from our having really believed in his name; a right to go to Christ is no proof we have done so. What *evidences* a person's being a true believer, is quite distinct from what *warrants* his applying to the Saviour: the latter arises from what God in his word *says* to him; the former appears from the change which is *wrought* in him. To put persons, therefore, upon examining themselves, whether they have faith, before they believe, is extremely injudicious; and to encourage professors in the persuasion they are believers, without Scripture evidence of an internal change, is awfully dangerous.

REV. ROB. HALL.

Those who are discouraged in coming to God from want of good works.

LET us bear this well in mind in our private temptations, when the devil accuseth and terrifieth our conscience to drive it to desperation. For he is the father of lying, and the enemy of Christian liberty; therefore he tormenteth us every moment with false fears, that when our conscience hath lost Christian liberty, it should feel the remorse of sin and condemnation, and always remain in anguish and terror. When that great dragon, I say, that old serpent the devil (*who deceiveth the whole world, and accuseth our brethren in the presence of God day and night*, Rev. xii. 9, 10.) cometh and layeth unto thy charge, that thou hast not only done no good, but hast also transgressed the law of God, say unto him, Thou troublest me with the remembrance of my sins past. Thou puttest me also in mind that I have

done no good. But this is nothing to me : for if either I trusted in mine own good deeds, or distrusted because I have done none, Christ should both ways profit me nothing at all. Therefore, whether thou lay my sins before me, or my good works, I pass not : but removing both far out of my sight, I only rest in that liberty wherein Christ hath made me free ; I know him to be profitable unto me, therefore I will not make him unprofitable : which I should do, if either I should presume to purchase myself favour and everlasting life by my good deeds, or should despair of my salvation because of my sins.

Wherefore let us learn with all diligence to separate Christ far from all works, as well good as evil ; from all laws both of God and man, and from all troubled consciences ; for with all these Christ hath nothing to do. He hath to do, I grant, with afflicted consciences : howbeit not to afflict them more, but to raise them up, and in their affliction to comfort them. Therefore if Christ appear in the likeness of an angry judge, or of a lawgiver that requireth a strait account of our life past ; then let us assure ourselves that it is not Christ, but a raging fiend. For the Scripture painteth out Christ to be our reconciliation, our advocate, and our comforter. Such a one he is and ever shall be : he cannot be unlike himself.

Therefore, whensoever the devil, transforming himself into the likeness of Christ, disputeth with us after this manner, This thou oughtest, being admonished by my word, to have done, and hast not done it ; and this thou oughtest not to have done, and hast done it ; know thou therefore that I will take on thee, &c. ;—let this nothing at all move us, but by and by let us think with ourselves,—Christ speaketh not to poor afflicted and despairing consciences after this manner ; he addeth not affliction to the afflicted ; he *breaketh not the bruised reed, neither quencheth he the smoking flax*, Isa. xlii. 3. Indeed, to the hard-hearted he speaketh sharply ; but such as are terrified and afflicted, he most lovingly and comfortably allureth unto him, saying, *Come unto me all ye that travail and be heavy laden, and I will refresh you*, Matt. xi. 28. *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, Matt. ix. 13. *Be of good comfort, my son ; thy sins are forgiven thee*, Matt. ix. 2. *Be not afraid ; I have overcome*

the world, John xvi. 33. *The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost*, Luke xix. 10. We must take heed, therefore, lest that we, being deceived with the wonderful sleights and infinite subtilties of Satan, do receive an accuser and condemner in the stead of a comforter and saviour ; and so under the visor of a false Christ, that is to say, of the devil, we lose the true Christ, and make him unprofitable unto us. LUTHER.

(A Dialogue.)

Epaphroditus.—But one thing greatly discourages me : I have no merits, nor plenty of good works wherewith I may make God favourable to me ; but I am a barren fig-tree, void of all good fruit.

Philemon.—The want of merits ought not to keep you from coming unto God. God saveth us not for the righteous works which we have done, but for his mercies' sake. If our salvation came of works and merits, then were grace no more grace. If everlasting life were gotten by deservings, then were it not the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. But the Apostle saith, *By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God, and cometh not by works, lest any man should boast himself—If righteousness come of the law, then Christ is dead in vain.—Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*. And we are taught in the Gospel, that *joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance*. What had the wounded man deserved, that he should be healed ? What had the strayed sheep merited, that the shepherd should so lovingly fetch it home again ? What good works brought Mary Magdalene, when Christ received her unto grace, and forgave her her sins ?—and so likewise of many others. If God should save us because of our merits and good works, so should we choose God by our works and merits ; and God not us, by his favour, grace, and mercy. But Christ saith, *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*. And St. John, wondering at this great mercy of God, bursts out into these words, and saith, *Behold what love the Father hath shewed on us, that we should be called the sons of God*. Again, *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the agree-*

ment for our sins. Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and forget not his benefits; who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thine iniquities; who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness. All good men, from the very beginning, have attributed and given the whole glory of their justification not to their own merits and good works, but to the free grace and undeserved mercy of God, that God may be all in all; and that he who rejoices should rejoice in the Lord.

For the contentation and quietness of your conscience in this behalf, remember that *Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Remember that Christ is a physician, and that *the whole have no need of a physician, but such as are sick.* Remember that Christ calleth unto him all such as are diseased, and laden with the burden of sin. He requireth no merits, only *Come.* Remember that *the Son of Man came to seek and to save that that was lost.* Remember that Christ is called a Saviour, that he should save them which otherwise should perish. Hear also what God saith by the prophet Isaiah, *Come to the waters all ye that are thirsty; and ye that have no money, come, buy, that ye may have to eat; come, buy wine and milk without any money, or money's worth. Wherefore do you lay out your money for the thing that feedeth not, and spend your labour about the thing that satisfieth you nothing? But hearken you rather unto me, and ye shall eat of the best, and your soul shall have her pleasure in plenteousness. Incline your ears, and come unto me; take heed, I say, and your soul shall live.* Our Saviour Christ also saith, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.* Again, in another place, *I will give to him that is athirst, of the well of the water of life. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* Also, *Let him that is athirst come, and let whosoever will, take of the water of life freely.* Here is the favour of God, remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, quietness of conscience, and everlasting life, promised freely without merits or deserts, to so many as will come unto Christ with a repentant heart and faithful mind. For, Christ was sent of God the Father to *preach good tidings unto the poor, that he might bind up the wounded hearts, that he might preach deliverance to*

the captive, and open the prison to them that are bound; declare the acceptable year of the Lord, and comfort all them that are in heaviness. He came into this world to save sinners. Therefore let it not dismay you, though you find in yourself a great many sins, and good works very few. Cast rather the eyes of your mind with strong faith on Christ and on his righteousness, on his merits, passion, and death, on his blessed body-breaking and his precious blood-shedding. Believe him to be ordained of God the Father, to be your wisdom and righteousness, your sanctification and redemption, that, as it is written, *He that rejoiceth should rejoice in the Lord. Count all your merits, good works, and righteousness, vile and of no price, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Labour to win Christ, and to be found in him,* &c. Phil. iii. 8—10.

REV. T. BECON.

Those who are discouraged because they cannot ascertain when their Conversion commenced.

Do you know the exact time of your natural birth? None can answer they do from their own knowledge and memory; and though some cannot obtain certain information from any one on what day, or even in what year they were born, yet they do not doubt of the fact. As effects in natural things lead back to their respective causes, and are infallible proofs of their reality, so it is in spiritual affairs. In this manner we are taught in Scripture to proceed, in order to gain assurance respecting facts which fall not under immediate personal observation. As, saith the Apostle, *every house is builded by some man;* as therefore every structure, from the princely palace to the meanest cottage, are incontestable proofs of human agency, so as saints are God's workmanship, *created anew in Christ Jesus, and habitations of God through the Spirit,* the nature of the change produced in them claims Jehovah for its Author; therefore, as the Apostle adds, *he that buildeth all things is God,* Heb. iii. 4. The great inquiry should be, Whether we are the subjects of the heavenly birth or not? for, as to the time when, it is an immaterial circumstance, any further than as related to the question, *How old art thou?* As it is not necessary to know the time of your natural birth, in order to prove your proper hu-

manity, neither is the knowledge of your spiritual birth, as to the time when, at all needful to evidence your true Christianity; the change may be demonstrably evident, though the time when it first commenced be uncertain. To know whether a person is born again, it should be considered that the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, whereby sinners are denominated *new creatures*, is set forth by figurative language. As there are new principles or dispositions produced, it is called a creation. *Created in Christ Jesus*, Eph. ii. 10. As it bears a resemblance to procreation, it is therefore called a *regeneration* and a *new birth*. These terms are used for the purpose of illustrating its nature; the evident and plain import of which are to point out, that a person who is the subject of such a gracious change, feels and views himself to be in such circumstances, in a spiritual sense, as resemble the natural condition of an infant; for such persons feel themselves feeble and forlorn; they are convinced of their utter inability to provide for the least of their numerous wants, or even to describe them; *like a new-born babe they desire the sincere milk of the word*, which they relish, taste the sweetness of, and are nourished by. They are dependent entirely on the Lord's care and kindness, who loves them, deals tenderly with them, feeds them with what is convenient for them, as they are able to bear it, clothes them with the *robe of righteousness* and *garments of salvation*. He teaches them gradually the things relating to the kingdom of grace into which they are brought, and of which they are naturally ignorant; *for they shall be all taught of the Lord*, Isa. liv. 13. As they have a disposition for spiritual activity, so the Lord increases their strength, takes them by the hand, teaches them to go, Hos. xi. 3. As they grow in acquaintance with their heavenly Father, and the household of faith, they feel a love to God, a fear of him, have their dependence upon him, and are desirous of his presence, protection, and guidance. They love all the people of God, and those the best who, as they think, most resemble him. Those, therefore, who are thus dependent upon God, humble before him, having a relish for divine things, or, in a word, dispositions towards God of a filial nature, becoming a child to his father and family; such have the evidences of being born again, they having been

brought with godly simplicity to *receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child*, without which, the Redeemer has declared, *no man can in any wise enter therein*, Luke xviii. 17. Thus the feeble state and forlorn condition of the Jews, when God first entered into covenant with them as a people, and they became his special property and care, is illustrated by an infant (Ezek. xvi.) in the most deplorable condition. So the spiritual experiences of his people, both sorrowful and sweet, are represented by the metaphor of a helpless infant, under the kind care of its loving, compassionate, and prudent parent. Again, such bear the likeness of their Father God; as by their first birth they partake of *the image of the earthly*, so by their second birth *they are made partakers of the heavenly*; *for that which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit*, John iii. 6. They that are born again, love what God does, and hate what he abhors, which gradually increaseth as they grow in grace, or to maturity, as *perfect men in Christ Jesus*. A holy disposition is therefore an infallible proof of a heavenly descent, or that such are *born again*.

REV. ROB. HALL.

Those who do not distinguish between being surprised into Sin, and being led captive by Sin.

WHAT surprisals into sin soever may befall an upright soul, yet it appears by these following particulars, that he is not the servant of sin, nor in full subjection to it. For,

1. Though he may be drawn to sin, yet he cannot reflect upon his sin without shame and sorrow; which plainly shews it to be an involuntary surprise. So Peter wept bitterly, Matt. xxvi. 75. And David mourned for his sin heartily. Others can fetch new pleasures out of their old sins, by reflecting on them; and some can glory in their shame, Phil. iii. 19; some are stupid and senseless after sin; and the sorrow of a carnal heart for it, is but a morning dew: but it is far otherwise with God's people.

2. Though a saint may be drawn to sin, yet it is not with a deliberate and full consent of his will; *their delight is in the law of God*, Rom. vii. 22. *They do that which they would not*, ver. 16. i. e. there are inward dislikes from the new nature:

and as for that case of David, which seems to have so much of counsel and deliberation in it, yet it was but in a single act; it was not in the general course of his life; he was upright in all things, i. e. in the general course and tenour of his life, 1 Kings xv. 5.

3. Though an upright soul may fall into sin, yet he is restless and unquiet in that condition, like a bone out of joint; and that speaks him to be none of sin's servants; as, on the contrary, if a man be engaged in the external duties of religion, and be restless, and unquiet there, his heart is not in it, he is not at rest till he be again in his earthly business; this man cannot be reckoned Christ's servant: a gracious heart is much after that rate employed in the work of sin, that a carnal heart is employed in the work of religion. That is a good rule, *Ea tantum dicuntur inesse, quæ insunt per modum quietis*: That is a man's true temper, wherein he is at rest. David fell into sin, but he had no rest in his bones because of it, Psalm xxxviii. 3. If his heart be off from God and duty for a little while, yet he recollects himself, and saith, as Psal. cxvi. 7. *Return to thy rest, O my soul.*

4. Though a sincere Christian fall into sin and commit evil; yet he proceeds not from evil to evil, as the ungodly do, Jer. ix. 3., but makes his fall into one sin a caution to prevent another sin. Peter by his fall got establishment for the time to come. If God will speak peace to them, they are careful to return no more to folly, Psalm lxxxv. 8. *In that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought! yea, what fear!* 2 Cor. vii. 11. It is not so with the servants of sin, one sin leaves them much more disposed to another sin.

5. A sincere Christian may be drawn to sin, but yet he would be glad with all his heart to be rid of sin: it would be more to him than thousands of gold and silver, that he might grieve and offend God no more; and that shews sin is not in dominion over him: he that is under the dominion of sin, is loath to leave his lusts. Sin's servants are not willing to part with it, they hold it fast, and refuse to let it go, as that text expresseth it, Jer. viii. 5. But the great complaint of the upright is expressed by the Apostle according to the true sense of their hearts, in Rom. vii. 24. *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

6. It appears they yield not themselves willingly to obey sin, inasmuch as it is the matter of their joy when God orders any providence to prevent sin in them: *Blessed be the Lord*, (said David to Abigail,) *and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou that hast kept me this day from shedding blood*, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33.

Here is blessing upon blessing for a sin-preventing providence. The author is blessed, the instrument blessed, the means blessed. O it is a blessed thing in the eyes of a sincere man to be kept from sin! he reckons it a great deliverance, a very happy escape, if he be kept from sin.

7. This shews that some who may be drawn to commit sin, yet are none of the servants of sin, that they do heartily beg the assistance of grace to keep them from sin: *Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins*, (saith the Psalmist, Psalm xix. 13.) *let them not have dominion over me*; q. d. Lord, I find propensities to sin in my nature, yea, and strong ones too; if thou leave me to myself, I am carried into sin as easily as a feather down the torrent. *O Lord, keep back thy servant.* And there is no petition that upright ones pour out their hearts to God in, either more frequently or more ardently than in this, to be kept back from sin.

8. This shews the soul not to be under the dominion of sin, that it doth not only cry to God to be kept back from sin, but uses the means of prevention himself; he resists it, as well as prays against it. *I was also upright before him, and kept myself from mine iniquity*, Psalm xviii. 23. *I have made a covenant with mine eyes*, Job xxxi. 1. And yet more fully in Isa. xxxiii. 15. *He shaketh his hands from holding bribes, and stoppeth his ears from hearing blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil.* See with what care the portals are shut at which sin useth to enter. All these things are very relieving considerations to poor souls questioning their integrity under the frequent surprisals of sin.

FLAVEL.

Those who conclude themselves lost while walking in darkness.

BUT you will say, Have not the best of God's children sometimes concluded themselves to be reprobated and cast away? Have they not lain under sad and fearful apprehensions of God's wrath? Have not some of them, who formerly walked in the

light of God's countenance and flourished in their assurance, yet afterwards have been so dejected, that they would not entertain any comfort or hopes of mercy and salvation?

To this I answer, It is true, it may indeed so happen that those saints, whose joys and comforts are at one time fresh and verdant, at another time wither and drop off, so that they look upon themselves as rotten trees, destined to make fuel for hell. Whence proceeds this? It is not from the Spirit of God; but as carnal men are apt to mistake the first work of conviction for melancholy or for temptation, so this really proceeds from one of these two causes.—When the children of God, after full assurance, come again not only to entertain doubts of their condition, but also to despair of themselves, looking on themselves as persons that God hath singled out to destruction; this proceeds not from the Holy Ghost, but from melancholy or temptation. Sometimes natural melancholy obstructs the sense of Divine comfort: as it is in clear water, when it is still and transparent the sun shines to the very bottom, but if you stir the mud, presently it grows so thick, that no light can pierce into it; so it is with the children of God, though their apprehensions of God's love be as clear and transparent sometimes as the very air that the angels and glorified saints breathe in, in heaven, yet if once the muddy humour of melancholy stirs, they become dark, so that no light or ray of comfort can break in to the deserted soul. And then, sometimes the devil causeth these tragedies by his temptations, that so, if it were possible, he might drive them to despair; he hates their graces, he envies their comforts, and therefore he would persuade them that all their former joys were delusions, proud dreams, and presumptuous fancies, and that they are still in the *gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*; and by such suggestions as these are, when he cannot hinder the work of grace, he strives what he can to hinder the sense of comfort. When, therefore, those that have once rejoiced under the comfortable persuasions of God's love to them, the Holy Ghost witnessing himself to them to be a *Spirit of Adoption*, by being in them a Spirit of Sanctification; if they now find themselves under the bondage of legal fears and terrors and slavish dejections, looking upon themselves

as under the revenging wrath of God, and as persons devoted to destruction; let them know such fears proceed not from the convictions of the Spirit of God, who hath been a Spirit of Adoption, but they proceed from the delusions of Satan; for those that once receive the *Spirit of Adoption*, never receive the *Spirit of Bondage again to fear*; that is, to fear with a slavish, tormenting fear.

BP. HOPKINS.

Those who think they have not the testimony of the Spirit, because they cannot always perceive it in them.

SOME of the children of God, because they find not always within themselves this testimony of the Spirit in a like measure, are therefore cast down and made oftentimes to think they never had it: for as none are more ready to boast of the Spirit than they who have him not; so none complain more that they want him, than they who possess him. The children of God in this being like unto rich worldlings, who suppose they be possessors of much, yet the great desire of more which is in them, causeth them to esteem that which they have as nothing, and therefore comfort not themselves with the lawful use of that which they have, but vex their spirits with restless thoughts for that which they want: even so it is customable with the children of God, albeit they have attained to a good manner of faith and love of God, and are even become rich in the grace of the Lord Jesus; yet are they so desirous of more, that many a time they esteem nothing of that which they have, but go about mourning and complaining that they have no faith, no love, no grace, no life; in which extremity we see, that many in their weakness offend the Lord their God. Herein, therefore, is the Christian to be admonished that he keeps mediocrity: to lament thy wants and thirst for more grace, is a sure token of a spiritual life; but let us so complain for that which we want, that we be comforted in God for that beginning and little measure of grace which we have; remember that the same mouth of God which commands thee to mourn, commands thee also to rejoice; we want not matter for both; matter we have of mourning, for which we may lament with the Apostle, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. vii. 24. Matter

of joy we have also in our God, for which we may rejoice with him, and say, *I thank God, through Jesus Christ*, verse 19: surely it cannot be without unthankfulness unto God so to mourn for our wants, that we give not praise to God for the beginning of grace we have.

And for this same effect, let us yet further consider, that this testimony of the Spirit is not at all times enjoyed in a like measure, for that were to enjoy heaven upon earth. The Lord, therefore, doth in such sort dispense it, that sometimes he lets his children feel it for their consolation, and again withdraws it from them for their humiliation: when they feel it, they so abound in joy, that all the terrors and threatenings of Satan, all his promises and allurements are despised of them, and trodden under their feet; they sing within themselves that glorious triumph of the Apostle, *Who shall separate us from the love of God?* Rom. viii. 35: but this joy proceeding from the fulness of faith, continues not, the voice of the Spirit of Adoption waxing somewhat more silent, fears and doubts succeed in that same heart which before abounded with joy: and this for our humiliation.

But now in this estate, lest the children of God be discouraged by the silence of the testimony, let them first of all have recourse to the fore-past working of God in them, let them call to mind with David the days of old, remember their joyful songs, by which they have praised God, their humble prayers by which many a time they have gotten access to the throne of grace, and these heavenly motions which have replenished their souls with joy, and so of the former footsteps of his grace, let them discern his presence even then when they cannot perceive them. And next, let them consider, that the godly in the time of their desertion, which is their spiritual disease, are evil judges of themselves, for they perceive not that which they possess: there may be an invincible hope of mercy in that soul, wherein for the present there is no sense of mercy; and this all the children of God may mark in their own experience: for whereof I pray thee hath it come, that thou a weak man hast fought so long against principalities and powers? hast endured so many years the fearful assaults of Satan? thou hast been troubled with doubting, but hast not despaired; thou hast been cast down, and

hast not perished; thou hast fallen, and yet risen again; thy enemy hath thrust sore at thee, yet hath he not prevailed against thee. No power, no policy of Satan hath ever been able to quench in thee that spark of life, which the Lord hath breathed into thee. Out of all doubt, thy standing hath been from the Spirit of Adoption, who hath wrought in thine heart a deeper sense of mercy, than that any contrary power is able to root out, yea, or thou thyself art able to perceive: hereof hath come thy standing both in temptations, which are from thine adversaries, and in those desertions, whereby the Lord hath exercised thee. Thus have we comfort not only in the glorious effects of God's mercy wrought in us, when we feel his presence, but also by our standing and perseverance in desertions, wherein it seems to us that the Lord hath absented himself from us: two excellent comforts, for the Christian; for thy standing in desertions proves that thou wert not deserted: apparent desertions are not desertions indeed: *Surely the Lord will not fail his people, nor forsake his inheritance*, Psalm xciv. 14. Again, thy standing against so many assaults of the devil, proves that the least spark of Christ's lively grace in a Christian, is stronger than that the gates of hell are able to prevail against it. Be therefore comforted, O thou man of God; for if it had been in Satan's power to have quenched thy life, he would have put it out long ere now: be assured thou shalt prevail and obtain the victory, in the strength and might of that mighty Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. **BP. COWPER.**

Though there is nothing more dangerous, yet there is nothing more ordinary, than for weak saints to make their sense and feeling the judge of their condition, which is dishonourable to God, and very disadvantageous to yourselves. Sense is sometimes opposite to reason, but always to faith; therefore do as those worthies did in 2 Cor. v. 7; *We walk by faith, and not by sight*. For a man to argue thus, 'Surely God is not my God, for I am not enlightened, I am not quickened, I am not melted, I am not raised, I am not enlarged, as formerly; O! I have not those sweet answers and returns of prayer, that once I had; I cannot find the Lord's quickening presence, nor his enlivening presence, nor his humbling presence, nor

his encouraging presence, as once I found ; therefore surely my condition is not good. O ! I am more backward to good, than formerly ; and more prone to evil, than formerly ; therefore I am afraid that God is not my God, and that the work of grace is not genuine upon me. God does not look upon me as in the days of old ; nor speak to me as in the days of old ; nor carry it towards me as in the days of old ; and therefore I am afraid that all is naught.' Verily, if you will make sense and feeling the judge of your estate and condition, you will never have peace nor comfort all your days. Thy estate, O Christian, may be very good, when sense and feeling say it is very bad. That child cannot but be perplexed, that thinks his father does not love him, because he does not always feel him smoothing and stroking him. Christians, you must remember, that it is one thing for God to love you, and another thing for God to tell you that he loves you. Your happiness lies in the first, your comfort in the second. God has stopped his ears against the prayers of many a precious soul, whom he has dearly loved. The best of men have at times lost that quickening, ravishing, and comforting presence of God, which once they have enjoyed. And, verily, he who makes sense and carnal reason a judge of his condition, will be happy and miserable, blessed and cursed, saved and lost, many times in a day, yea, in an hour.

The counsel that I would give to such a soul as is apt to set up reason in the room of faith, is this—whatsoever thy estate and condition be, never make sense and feeling the judge of it, but only the word of God. Did ever God appoint carnal reason, sense and feeling, to be a judge of thy spiritual estate ? Surely no ; and why then wilt thou subject thy soul to their judgments ? God will judge thee at last by his word ; *The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day.* Carnal reason is an enemy to faith, it is ever crossing and contradicting faith. It fills the mind full of cavils and prejudices, full of pleas and arguments to keep Christ and the soul asunder, and the soul and the promise asunder, and the soul and peace and comfort asunder. It will never be well with thee, so long as thou art swayed by carnal reason. Remember Job was as famous for his confidence, as for his patience ; *Though he slay me, yet will*

I trust in him, Job xiii. 15. As the body lives by breathing, so the soul lives by believing. REV. T. BROOKES.

Those who are discouraged because they cannot grieve enough for their Sins.

Your sorrow is, that you cannot enough grieve for your sins. Let me tell you, that the angels themselves sing at this lamentation ; neither doth the earth afford any so sweet music in the ears of God. This heaviness is the way to joy. Worldly sorrow is worthy of pity, because it leadeth to death ; but this deserves nothing but envy and gratulation. If those tears were common, hell would not so enlarge itself. Never sin, repented of, was punished ; and never any thus mourned, and repented not. Lo, you have done that which you grieve you have not done. That good God, whose act is his will, accounts of our will as our deed. If he required sorrow proportionable to the heinousness of our sins, there were no end of mourning. Now his mercy regards not so much the measure as the truth of it, and accounts us to have that which we complain to want. I never knew any truly penitent, who in the depth of his remorse was afraid of sorrowing too much ; nor any unrepentant, who wished to sorrow more. Yea, let me tell you, that this sorrow is better and more than that deep heaviness for sin, which you desire. Many have been vexed with an extreme remorse for some sin, from the gripes of a galled conscience, which yet never came where true repentance grew ; in whom the conscience plays at once the accuser, witness, judge, tormentor ; but an earnest grief, for the want of grief, was never found in any but a gracious heart. You are happy, and complain. Tell me, I beseech you, this sorrow which you mourn to want, is it a grace of the Spirit of God, or not ? If not, why do you sorrow to want it ? If it be, oh, how happy is it to grieve for want of grace ! The God of all truth and blessedness hath said, *Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness ;* and with the same breath, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* You say you mourn, Christ saith you are blessed ; you say you mourn, Christ saith you shall be comforted. Either now distrust your Saviour, or else confess your happiness, and with patience expect his promised consolation. What

do you fear? you see others stand like strong oaks, unshaken, unremoved: you are but a reed, a feeble plant, tossed and bowed with every wind, and with much agitation bruised. Lo, you are in tender and favourable hands, that never brake any, whom their sins bruised, never bruised any whom temptations have bowed. You are but flax, and your best is not a flame, but an obscure smoke of grace. Lo, here his Spirit is as a soft wind, not as cold water; he will kindle, will never quench you. The sorrow you want is his gift: take heed, lest while you vex yourself with dislike of the measure, you grudge at the giver. Beggars may not choose. This portion he hath vouchsafed to give you; if you have any, it is more than he was bound to bestow; yet you say, what, no more?—as if you took it unkindly that he is no more liberal. Even these holy discernments are dangerous. Desire more, so much as you can, but repine not when you do not attain. Desire, but so as you be free from impatience, free from unthankfulness. Those that have tried can say how difficult it is to complain, with due reservation of thanks. Neither know I whether it is worse to long for good things impatiently, or not at all to desire them. The fault of your sorrow is rather in your conceit, than in itself. And if indeed you mourn not enough, stay but God's leisure, and your eyes shall run over with tears. How many do you see sport with their sins, yea, brag of them! How many that should die for want of pastime if they might not sin freely, and more freely talk of it! What a saint are you to these, that can droop under the memory of the frailty of youth, and never think you have spent enough of tears! Yet so I encourage you in what you have, as one that persuades you not to desist from suing for more. It is good to be covetous of grace, and to have our desires herein enlarged with our receipts. Weep still, and still desire to weep; but let your tears be as the rain in the sunshine, comfortable and hopeful; and let not your longing savour of murmur or distrust. These tears are reserved, this hunger shall be satisfied, this sorrow shall be comforted. There is nothing betwixt God and you but time. Prescribe not to his wisdom; hasten not his mercy. His grace is enough for you; his glory shall be more than enough.

BP. HALL.

Those who are discouraged from a sense of want of love to God.

It may be thou art hindered from living by unshaken faith, because thou hast so little love to God; he ought to have all thy heart and soul, and mind and strength, but it grieves thee to observe what a small part he has of them. This view is always humbling. Our love, at best, is not what it ought to be. It is not constant: it ebbs and flows. It is not perfect: the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit. It is not what God deserves as payment for love received: who will compute the full value of his love to one redeemed sinner? On earth it surpasseth knowledge; in heaven it surpasseth all returns of praise. The highest love of glorified saints is only acknowledgment, but not payment. They are perfectly humble, and therefore willing that God should have all the glory of their salvation. To him they ascribe it. The same mind in thee would refine thy love, and make it something like theirs. When thou art considering thy love to God, and ashamed at the sight of it, then look at his. Look especially at his, when thine is little. Believing views of his will increase thine; thine has nothing else to excite it, or to nourish it. Thou art not called upon to warm thyself with the sparks of *thy* love to God, but with the pure constant flame of *his* love to *thee*. His is to keep up thine. His is the first cause, and thine is but the effect. The experience of his will heal all the infirmities of thine. When thy love is little, unsettled, cold, and dull, then study the Divine properties of his; these, rightly understood, will increase, settle, warm, and actuate thine affections. By believing meditation, thou wilt find a pardon provided for thy little love; the sense of it will comfort thy conscience. Thy heart will grow hot within thee; while thou art musing the fire will kindle. It will break out. Thou wilt speak with thy tongue praise and thanksgiving to thy loving God and Father.

REV. W. ROMAINE.

Those who are discouraged on account of their indisposition to religious duties.

It is no uncommon thing with gracious minds, to discover in themselves a greater indisposition to religious duties, when they are actually engaged in those duties; and like the Apostle of old, *then*, more espe-

cially, *when they would do good, evil is present with them*, Rom. vii. 21. And the reason is plain. Corruption in the heart is then most likely to break out, when we are taking pains to suppress it. And as the swelling tide rages with more fury in proportion to the obstructions it meets with in its way: so the corruptions of our fallen nature will form a tide of a more furious current in our affections, when by drawing nigh to God we seek to throw up a fence to resist, and keep them under.

Neither, in those seasons, do gracious souls find more immediate resistance from the corruptions of their own nature, arising within only; for the temptations of the enemy from without also, as generally assail with most violence when they draw nigh the mercy-seat. He knows full well what effects are induced from the soul's communion with God, to undermine his kingdom in the heart, and therefore, as of old, the prophet was shewn when *Joshua the high priest stood before the angel of the Lord, Satan was standing at his right hand to resist him*, Zech. iii. 1.; even so it is now; when the Lord's people in the righteousness and strength of their spiritual Joshua stand before the Lord, Satan still resists, by inducing wandering thoughts, calling off the affections, and harassing the mind with evil suggestions and unbelief, that their prayers may be hindered.

And if you ask, why the Lord permits these things under which his people go heavily from day to day? The answer is direct. It is to humble them before the mercy-seat; to make them more and more sensible of the plague of their own heart; to let them see that all preparation is from the Lord, so that self-confidence may be rooted out, and Christ alone rooted in. By this sweet process of his grace the Lord over-rules evil for good, in teaching most feelingly that our best services, our purest prayers, our most holy things, can only be *accepted in the Beloved*: for our very robes must be all washed, as those were which John saw of the saints in glory, *in the blood of the Lamb*. All this, I confess, is a humbling lesson to the sinner, but it sweetly tends to the exaltation of the Saviour, when we recollect at all times, that *he bears the iniquity of our most holy things*, as the high priest represented him of old, Exodus xxviii. 38. And it ought to be the most refreshing consideration to a poor bowed-down soul in the hour of

prayer, when groaning under the united pressure of in-dwelling corruption and the attacks of Satan, to call to mind that though we are all sin, Jesus our Advocate is all righteousness; and while in ourselves we cannot but appear full of evil before God; yet in him we are accepted, who, while he appears before God, appears purposely for his people. DR. HAWKER.

Those who are discouraged by the apprehension of the weakness of their Faith.

THAT mere natural men do neither know nor acknowledge the things of God, we do not marvel, *because they are spiritually to be discerned*: but they in whose hearts the light of grace doth shine, they that are taught of God, why are they so weak in faith? Why is their assenting to the law so scrupulous? so much mingled with fear and wavering? It seemeth strange that ever they should imagine the law to fail. It cannot seem strange if we weigh the reason. If the things which we believe be considered in themselves, it may truly be said, that faith is more certain than any science. That which we know, either by sense, or by infallible demonstration, is not so certain as the principles, articles, and conclusions of Christian faith, concerning which we must note that there is a certainty of evidence, and a certainty of adherence. Certainty of evidence we call that, when the mind doth assent to this or that, not because it is true in itself, but because the truth is clear, because it is manifest unto us. Of things in themselves most *certain*, except they be also most *evident*, our persuasion is not so assured, as it is of things more evident, although in themselves they be less *certain*. It is as sure, if not surer, that there be spirits, as that there be men: but we be more assured of these than of them, because these are more evident. The truth of some things is so evident, that no man which heareth them can doubt of them: as when we hear that a part of any thing is less than the whole, the mind is constrained to say, This is true. If it were so in matters of faith, then, as all men have equal certainty of this, so no believer should be more scrupulous and doubtful than another. But we find the contrary. The angels and spirits of the righteous in heaven have certainty most evident of things spiritual: but this they have by the light of glory. That which we see by the

light of grace, though it be indeed more certain; yet it is not to us so evidently certain, as that which sense or the light of nature will not suffer a man to doubt of. Proofs are vain and frivolous, except they be more certain, than is the thing proved: and do we not see how the Spirit every where in the Scripture proving matters of faith, laboureth to confirm us in the things which we believe, by things whereof we have sensible knowledge? I conclude, therefore, that we have less *certainty of evidence* concerning things believed, than concerning sensible or naturally perceived. Of those who doth doubt at any time? Of them at sometime who doubteth not? I will not here allege the sundry confessions of the perfectest that have lived upon earth, concerning their great imperfections this way; which if I did, I should dwell too long upon a matter sufficiently known by every faithful man that doth know himself.

The other, which we call the *certainty of adherence*, is, when the heart doth cleave and stick unto that which it doth believe. This certainty is greater in us than the other. The reason is this, the faith of a Christian doth apprehend the words of the law, the promises of God, not only as true, but also as good; and therefore even then, when the evidence which he hath of the truth is so small, that it grieveth him to feel his weakness in assenting thereto, yet is there in him such a sure adherence unto that which he doth but faintly and fearfully believe, that his spirit having once truly tasted the heavenly sweetness thereof, all the world is not able quite and clean to remove him from it: but he striveth with himself to hope against all reason of believing, being settled with Job upon this immovable resolution, *Though God kill me, I will not give over trusting in him.* For why? This lesson remaineth for ever imprinted in him, *It is good for me to cleave unto God,* Psalm xxxvii.

Now the minds of all men being so darkened as they are with the foggy damp of original corruption, it cannot be that any man's heart living should be either so enlightened in the knowledge, or so established in the love of that wherein his salvation standeth, as to be perfect, neither doubting nor shrinking at all. If any such were, what doth let why that man should not be justified by his own inhe-

rent righteousness? For righteousness inherent, being perfect, will justify. And perfect faith is a part of perfect righteousness inherent; yea, a principal part, the root and the mother of all the rest: so that if the fruit of every tree be such as the root is, faith being perfect, as it is if it be not at all mingled with distrust and fear, what is there to exclude other Christian virtues from the like perfections? And then what need we the righteousness of Christ? His garment is superfluous: we may be honourably clothed with our own robes, if it be thus. But let them beware, who challenge to themselves strength which they have not, lest they lose the comfortable support of that weakness which indeed they have.

Some *shew*, although no *soundness* of ground there is which may be alleged for defence of this supposed perfection in certainty, touching matters of our faith; as 1st, That Abraham did believe, and doubted not: 2ndly, That the Spirit, which God hath given us to no other end, but only to assure us that we are the sons of God, to embolden us to call upon him as our Father, to open our eyes, and to make the truth of things believed evident unto our minds, is much mightier in operation than the common light of nature, whereby we discern sensible things: wherefore we must needs be more sure of that we believe, than of that we see; we must needs be more certain of the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, than we are of the light of the sun when it shineth upon our faces. 1. To the allegation that Abraham did not doubt, I answer, that this negation doth not exclude all fear, all doubting, but only that which cannot stand with true faith. It freeth Abraham from doubting through infidelity, not from doubting through infirmity; from the doubting of unbelievers, not of weak believers; from such a doubting as that whereof the prince of Samaria is attainted, who hearing the promise of sudden plenty in the midst of extreme dearth, answered, *Though the Lord would make windows in heaven, were it possible so to come to pass?* But that Abraham was not void of all doubtings, what need we any other proof, than the plain evidence of his own words? Gen. xvii. 17. 2. The reason which is taken from the power of the Spirit were effectual, if God did work like a natural agent, as the fire doth inflame, and the sun enlighten, according

to the uttermost ability which they have to bring forth their effects: but the incomprehensible wisdom of God doth limit the effects of his power to such a measure as it seemeth best to himself. Wherefore he worketh that certainty in all, which sufficeth abundantly to their salvation in the life to come; but in none so great as attaineth in this life unto perfection. Even so, O Lord, it hath pleased thee; even so it is best and fittest for us, that feeling still our own infirmities, we may no longer breathe than pray *Adjuva Domine, Help, Lord, our incredulity.* HOOKER.

Reflections for those who are weak in Faith, and whose Progress in the Divine life is gradual.

MANY are apt to think that they do not enjoy a life of faith in Christ, unless they find *all joy and peace in believing*; when, alas! the life of faith principally consists in believing in hope, *counting him faithful that hath promised*, when there seems no human possibility of its being accomplished. This evidences the strength and life of faith much more than being in a spiritual elevation, through the manifestation of divine love, and brings more glory to God. REV. T. ALLEN.

The health of the soul is more seen in its desires than its enjoyments.

REV. W. ROMAINE.

Their progress in the divine life, though more gradual, is solid, and is as real as those that are more rapturous and joyful, and commonly leaves the most abiding comfort: they are equally safe as those that are *strong in faith*, and are commonly led in a smoother path through the wilderness than others, by which it appears that the Lord is tender in his compassions to his people. REV. T. ALLEN.

Consolation is one thing, faith another. This latter grace often lays hold of the promises made in Christ with the firmest grasp, at the very time when hope and comfort are interrupted by the morbid state of the bodily and mental powers. Our feelings and frames, thank God, are not the foundation upon which we build. Never perhaps was stronger faith exhibited, even by our Saviour himself, than when he

uttered those piercing words, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

REV. D. WILSON.

We trust not to our good frames, or warm feelings, or sensible comforts, or to any of the genuine fruits and effects of faith, but we trust what God says simply, as his record: and therefore we walk in a constant dependence of the truth of God in his word, and upon the faithfulness of God to his word. True faith has no foundation, when given, but the word of God; nothing to rest on but the Divine truth, no support but the Divine power, and no growth but from the Divine influence.

REV. W. ROMAINE.

It was not the *strength* of sight, which was the security of the Israelite when looking on the brazen serpent; a glimmering view from a distance was equally effectual as the clearest vision: so it is not the *strength* of faith, but *faith itself* which unites to Jesus, and derives from him the blessings of salvation.

REV. W. GOODE.

Though I cannot always say in full assurance of faith, Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*, yet I can always in the fullest assurance of faith say, Christ loved sinners, and gave himself for sinners.

W. MASON.

We should bear in mind, that our first coming to Christ by faith, or believing on him, is not a believing that we *shall* be saved by him, but a believing on him that we *may* be saved by him.

REV. R. TRAILL.

Your business is with Jesus, with his free, unmerited love, with his glorious promises, &c., and you are called to live by faith on the faithful heart of Christ. Do not then puzzle yourself about contrition, faithfulness, love, joy, power over sin, and a thousand such things, which Satan will persuade you you must bring to Christ. He will receive you gladly with the great mountain of sin; and the smallest grain of faith at Christ's feet will remove that mountain.

REV. J. FLETCHER.

When thy love to God is little, and thou art ashamed of it, then look especially at his love, for thou art not called upon to

warm thyself with the sparks of thy love to God, but with the pure constant flame of his love to thee, which is to keep up thine.

ROMAINE.

We should ever bear in mind, that God loves us, not as sinless, but as he views us in Christ. Thus, though the believer be an object of mercy, a subject of grace, and an heir of promise; yet not one single drop of mercy or grace, nor one word of promise is made *to his person*, but only as he stands in, and is related to, his gracious Saviour, according to covenant love.

W. MASON.

Our hope depends not upon the exercise of grace in us, but upon the fulness of grace and love *in the Lord*, and upon *his obedience unto death*.

REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Christians may mistake their case, by measuring their growth by advances of the top only, not of the root. Though a man be not growing taller, he may be growing stronger. If a tree be taking with the ground, fixing itself in the earth, and spreading out its roots; it is certainly growing, although it be not taller than formerly. But who is sufficient to raise the drooping spirits of believers, and dispel their doubts and fears?

REV. T. BOSTON.

We may examine ourselves at some seasons without advantage. Our souls being in the dark, we may not be able to see any thing in us that looks like the work of God: or we may be afraid of drawing a wrong conclusion. We must therefore not compare ourselves with yesterday, if we would know whether we have got any more steps in our way to heaven. It might be much better with us yesterday than to-day as to the frame of our souls, and yet we may in general have got some ground. If we would know our growth, we must look back to the time when we first gave up ourselves to the Redeemer, if we can remember it, and compare ourselves now with ourselves then.

HAYWARD & PYKE.

There is a more discernible growth and ripening, in some Christians than in others. The faith of some *groweth exceedingly*, 2 Thess. i. 3; of others, more slowly, Heb.

ANTH.

v. 12; but yet there are improvements of grace in all upright ones. Habits are more deeply radicated, or fruits of obedience more increased. If any upright soul be stumbled at this, as not being able to discern the increase of his graces after all his duties, let such consider, that the growth of grace is discerned as the growth of plants is; we perceive them rather to have grown, than to grow. Compare time past and present, and you may see a growth; but usually our eager desires after more, make us overlook what we have as nothing.

FLAVEL.

A due consideration of the omniscience of Christ, is a great encouragement to the meanest and weakest believers, who are upright and sincere. Hence he says of himself, that he *will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax*, Matt. xii. 20. Be our strength like that of a *bruised reed*, which is next to none at all, *he will not bruise it*; nay, he will cherish and add strength to it. Nor shall *the smoking flax*, the least degree imaginable of grace, be quenched, while under his eye and care. Let the weak believer, amidst all his doubts and perplexities, find relief in this, viz. that the Lord Christ, with whom we have to do, sees, knows, and approves the least spark of heavenly fire that is kindled in us by his Spirit. The least seed of grace that is planted in us, is under his eye and care, to preserve, water, and cherish it. He takes notice of the least endeavours of grace in the heart, against the power of sin; he perceives the principle and actings of grace, in that very trouble and sorrow, wherewith the soul is overwhelmed in apprehension of the want of it; he knows that much of a soul's trouble for want of grace, is from grace; he sees the love that works in trouble for want of faith, and the faith that works in trouble for want of holiness. . . .

Oftentimes holiness in the heart is more known by the opposition made to it, than by its own prevalent working; the Spirit's operation is known by the flesh's opposition. We find a man's strength by the burden he carries, rather than by the pace he goes. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* is a better evidence of grace and holiness than, *God, I thank thee, I am not as other men*. In the soul's conflict with sin, what is it that is troubled and grieved

in thee? What is it that cries out, and complains, and longs for deliverance? Is it not the *new creature*? Is it not the principle of spiritual life, whereof you are a partaker?

While we are in the flesh, our duties will taste of the vessel whence they proceed. Weakness, defilements, treachery, hypocrisy, will attend them. Hence the complaint of the Church, Isa. lxiv. 6. The chaff is sometimes so mixed with the wheat, the corn can scarcely be discerned. And the more spiritual any man is, the more he sees of his unspiritualness in his spiritual duties. An outside performance will satisfy an outside Christian. Job abhorred himself most when he knew himself best. The clearer discoveries we have of God, the viler will every thing of self appear. Further, duties and performances are oftentimes very ill measured by us. A man, when he has had distractions to wrestle with, no outward advantage to aid him, no extraordinary provocations of hope, fear, or sorrow, on a natural account, may rise from his knees with thoughts that he has done nothing in his duty but provoked God; when it may be there have been more workings of grace in contending with the deadness cast on the soul, than when by a concurrence of moved natural affections and outward provocations, a frame has been raised that has, to the man himself, seemed to reach to heaven. So that this perplexity about duties is nothing but what is common to the people of God, and ought to be no obstruction to peace.

DR. OWEN.

Those who lay too much stress on their frames and feelings.

YOUNG believers are liable to fall into a great mistake, which keeps their faith weak, and stops its growth, namely, a hearkening to sense, and trusting to its reports.

They are seeking to be established; and they think, that they should have no doubt of their being true believers, if they had but the testimony of sense, and comfortable feelings to assure them of it; and being used to judge in this way in other matters, for it is our strongest evidence in natural things, they are disposed to expect the same in spiritual; and they are the rather disposed to it, because sensible comforts are promised in Scripture; which being very desirable and pleasing to nature, they are apt to covet them too much,

and, from not regarding what the Scripture says about them, they are apt to seek them in a wrong way, and for a wrong end. Sense judges from what it sees, and draws its inferences from what it feels; so that its report to the conscience, either of a believer's state, or of his growth in it, is not from unchangeable things, which would settle the conscience in peace, but from changeable things, which leave room for continual doubting. Sense also looks at the fruits of faith more than at the object of it; and if the believer has been misled, and taught to confound these two together, he will be at great uncertainty in judging of his state: for, instead of making the word of God, he will make his comforts the ground of his faith, and as these are more or less, so will his faith be: when he has comfortable feelings, then he will think himself a believer; and, when he has none, then he will think himself an unbeliever, changing his judgment of himself, as his feelings do, like the wind, and varying as his comforts do, like the weather. This is a common case; I have seen the sad effects of it in the lives of many of my acquaintance, who, from being taught thus to judge of themselves, were tossed about for several years, up and down, now comforted, then doubting, and could not get any solid establishment, till the word and Spirit of God convinced them that sense was not to be the ground of their believing, nor the object to which they were to look. Sense judges by feeling, and reports what it sees. Sense says, Now I am in the favour of God, for I feel it: Now he is my God, for I find him so, I am comforted: Now he demonstrates it to me; for I feel nearness to him in prayer, and sweet answers: Now I am sure my duties and services are acceptable; for I am quite lively in them, and I come from them with warm affections: Now I cannot doubt, for I feel the assurance of his love to me. And when sense has lost those comfortable feelings, then it draws contrary inferences.—Now I am not in the favour of God, for I don't feel it: Now he is not my God; for I don't find him so, I am not comforted, &c. What can be the issue of this but continual wavering and changing? for our feelings are sometimes more, and sometimes less, as every believer experiences. What an unsettled state then must he be in, who has no way to judge of himself, but by those changeable

things! what room does he leave for continual doubting, and what trouble and misery does he thereby bring upon himself, as well as dishonour to the unchangeableness of God in his nature and promises!

If the poor weak believer should say, I am convinced of this, and I should be glad to have my faith so fixed, that I might be freed from doubts and fears; then let it rest upon the word of God, which is the only ground of believing, and is therefore called the word of faith, upon which faith is built, and by which it is nourished and grows up. The believer should receive and rely upon what God hath spoken, and because he hath spoken it; for his word changeth not. It abideth the same for ever; therefore, what it truly reports stands upon an immoveable rock. Sense and feeling may report things contrary to it, but the believer can silence them with—God has spoken it; for his faith has evidence of things not seen, and he does not form his judgment by the things which are seen, but by the things which are not seen. Generally speaking, faith judges the very contrary to what sense perceives. Abraham, against hope, believed in hope: so do all his children. They believe the pardon of sin, victory over sin, and the death of sin; the immortality of the body, though crumbled to dust and atoms; the second coming of Christ, and the eternal state of happiness or misery. Faith looks at God's word, calling the things which be not, as though they were, and is commonly forced to contradict sense. Sense judges from what it sees—faith from what God says. Sense is governed by what appears—faith by what God says shall be. Sense looks inward—faith looks outward. Faith can answer the seeming contradictions, which sense opposes to it, from the word of God, which cannot be broken; and when sense is ready to despair, and all its fine frames and feelings are gone, then it is the believer's happy privilege still to trust in the Lord, and to have a good hope because of the word of his grace.

But perhaps thou art ready to say, It is written, that there is great joy and peace in believing, yea, joy unspeakable and full of glory. True, these are what faith produces, and not what it is. These are the fruits of faith, which it brings forth in most abundance from the inexhaustible fulness of Jesus. The more simple the believer

is, the more he eyes Christ the object of faith, and his word the ground of faith, the more clear and distinct will the actings of his faith be, and consequently it will bring greater peace into the conscience, and more joy into the affections: but still these fruits are not faith, no more than the fruit is the tree. The fruits do not go before faith, but follow it, and grow from it: this is God's order. He gives us his word to be the ground of our believing, and, by believing, all things promised in the word are made ours; then we go on comfortably, and are happy: but when sense is put in the place of the word, then the consequence is, that weak believers have got a changeable rule to judge of themselves by, which hinders them from being established in believing, and from attaining the promised peace and joy.

Some may begin to object, What! are you against all lively frames and sensible comforts? No, God forbid. I would have them spring from the right cause, that they might be more pure and fixed than they commonly are. God's word and promises are an unchangeable foundation to rest upon, even when sensible feelings are gone; because Christ revealed in the word, and laid hold of in the promises, changeth not. Therefore, reader, for thine own sake, and for the glory of God, take heed what thou buildest thy faith upon. Beware of making any thing, that sense reports to thee, the ground of it, but rest it upon that which abideth for ever. The word of God is a sure foundation. It will never fail thee. Thou mayest safely depend upon it, because it cannot be broken, and steadfastly rely upon Christ to make its promises good to thee. There is thy object: look at him. And since he is thine, thy Saviour and thy God, make use of him as such, and trust body and soul, and all things belonging to them, in his hands, and, among the rest, thy comforts. Be content he should give them to thee as seemeth him good. Set not thy heart upon them, nor follow him, as the multitude did, for the sake of his loaves and fishes, and the dainties that he gave them, who, when these were withheld, soon forsook their kind benefactor. Thou art by faith to make up all thy happiness in him, and in him only; and he himself, being thine, let him give thee or take away what he will besides,—thou hast enough. What! is not this comfort enough, that thou hast

got the *pearl of great price*, the infinitely rich, inestimably-precious Jesus? who has the wisdom of God to contrive what is best for thee, boundless love to dispose him, and almighty power to enable him to give it thee, and he has promised it: canst thou desire more? Walk then with him by faith, and not by sight. When the word of God is the ground of thy faith, which rests there and is grown to a fixed settlement, then thou wilt be enabled to go on comfortably, whatever thy frames and feelings be; yea, when these are at the lowest ebb, thou wilt not be thereby discouraged. Suppose thou art walking in darkness, thou canst walk by faith; because thou hast a promise, *Who is among you that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God*, Isaiah l. 10. Still, let him trust and believe. Why? Because God is his God still. Mind that—*his* God still; this blessed relation still subsists, and faith may draw comfort from it in the darkest hour. Suppose thou art in heaviness through manifold temptations, the word says to thee, *Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*: here thou mayest quiet thy heavy heart, and rest with confidence, till the Lord deliver thee out of thy temptations. Suppose God hideth his face from thee, thou hast the example of those in the same case, *I will wait for the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and will look for him*, Isaiah viii. 17. Wait in faith, looking for him, and thou shalt see the light of his countenance. Suppose all other comforts fail; thou hast one still, worth more than all—*This God is my God for ever and ever. He will never leave me nor forsake me*. This is the happiness of the true believer, he is enabled to maintain his confidence, when sensible feelings are no more. And thou seest, reader, how this happiness is attained, and how it is preserved. It is by trusting to things which change not—the word of God, the Son of God, and his promises; all which are in him, yea, made in him, and in him amen, fulfilled by him. May the Lord help thee simply to trust his word, and to live upon Christ for the fulfilling of it; and then thou wilt indeed get, what thou art now seeking in vain, a comfortable frame, and wilt be enabled to maintain it against all the discouragements of sense. To that end search the Scrip-

tures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation; and let it be thy daily request to the Lord, to make thee strong in faith, that thou mayest not stagger at his promises through unbelief, but mayest against hope believe in hope. Beg of him, when sense goes contrary to the word, to enable thee still to believe it, and not to doubt of Christ's faithfulness to fulfil it; and ask for strength to walk every moment by faith, and not by sight. Thus the Lord will carry thee on safely and sweetly from faith to faith, till thou receive the end of thy faith, even the salvation of thy soul. May it be so. Amen. ROMANE.

There is a great fault among those who have fled to Christ's righteousness in justification, that they use to come forth from duties, as a stomach from a honeycomb. Ofttimes we make our liberty and access to God the ground of our acceptance; and according to the ebbings and flowings of our inherent righteousness, so doth the faith and confidence of justification ebb and flow. Christians, this ought not to be: in so doing, you make your own righteousness your righteousness before God; for when the want of satisfaction in your duties maketh you question your interest so often, is not the satisfaction of your minds in such duties made the ground of your pleading interest? Give you liberty and access, you can believe any thing; remove it, and you can believe nothing. Certainly this is a sandy foundation; you ought to build nothing on performances; you should be as vile in your own eyes, and think your nakedness as open, when you come nearest God, when you have most liveliness, as when he hideth his face, and duty withereth. Shall filthy rags be your ornament? No, Christians! be more acquainted with the unspotted righteousness of the immaculate Lamb of God, and find as great necessity of covering your cleanest duties with it, as your foulest faults; and thus shall you be kept still humble and vile in your own eyes, and have continual employment for Christ Jesus. Your best estate should not puff you up, and your worst estate should not cast you down; therefore be much in the search of the filthiness of your holy actions. This were a spiritual study, a noble discovery, to unbowel your duties, to divide them, and give unto God what is God's, and take

unto yourselves what is your own. The discovery of filthiness in them needeth not hinder his praise, and the discovery of grace in them needeth not mar your shame. God hath most glory when we have most shame; these two grow in just proportion: so much is taken from God, as is given to the creature. PROF. BINNING.

There are seasons, when there appears a reality, a life, and a warmth, in our religion. Our love is ardent, our faith steadfast, our hope towering. Our mountain stands strong; and then we say that we shall never be moved, that emotions so deep and powerful must be lasting. But let a few days, or perhaps only a few hours, pass away, and what is our language then? *The Lord hath hid his face from us, and we are troubled.* All our lively feelings are gone. Our soaring hopes are changed into gloomy apprehensions, our glowing joys into a most distressing coldness. We still make a Christian profession; but we look into ourselves, and can see little or nothing there, which warrants it, nothing, which distinguishes the sanctified from the worldly heart.

Now this painful experience, should caution us against attaching too much importance to lively frames and feelings. When we enjoy them, it should teach us to expect their departure; when we are destitute of them, to remember that by prayer and renewed application to Christ they may yet return; and, at all times, it should lead us to be fearful of making them, in any degree, the grounds of our dependence; to consider them as the gifts of a divine Comforter, designed to refresh, but not to puff up the Christian; to encourage his exertions, but not to make him trust in them; to give him strength, not to lead him to forget his weakness; to enable him to glory in the cross of Christ, not to give him reason to imagine, that he no longer needs the sprinkling of the blood that stained it. REV. C. BRADLEY.

We do not live by feeling, but by faith. It is the privilege of a Christian to begin with faith, and so to rise up to feeling. You would begin with feeling, and so come down to faith; but you must begin with faith, and so rise up to feeling. And I pray tell me, is it not sufficient to be as our Master was? Did not Christ want the sense of God's love, when he said, *My*

God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Yea, had not Christ the sense of God's anger upon him, when he performed the greatest act of obedience that ever the sun saw? Yet did he then say, I am not the child of God, because I want the sense of God's love, and am under the sense of God's anger? No, but with the same breath that he said he was forsaken, he said, *My God, my God*; and at the same time he called God Father: *Father, forgive them, &c.* So may you do. Though God hath forsaken you, though you want the sense of his love, yea, and are under the sense of God's anger, yet at the same time you may say, the Lord is my Father; and you may go to him as your Father. And if you can say, God is my Father, have you any reason for your discouragements? Yet how often are God's own people discouraged and cast down! O! you who are the disciples of Christ, labour more and more to follow your Master; and as David said, so do you often say, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*

REV. W. BRIDGE.

It is possible, yea, too common for gracious souls to be reduced to a very low ebb, both of graces and comforts; how low I will not say. Grace, indeed, cannot be totally intermitted, nor finally lost; but there may be an omission of the act, even though there be not an omission of the habit. Certain it is, one that, like Paul, has been transported with joy, even to the third heavens, and cried, *I am more than a conqueror: who shall separate me from the love of Christ?* may, at another time, lie mourning, as at the gates of death, crying, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* One that has walked in sweet communion with God, rejoicing in the light of his countenance, may afterwards *walk in darkness, and see no light.* He who has cast anchor within the veil, and rode securely in the peaceful harbour of assurance, may seem to feel his anchor of hope lost, and go adrift into the stormy ocean again, crying with the Church, *My hope is perished from the Lord.* His calm and clear air may be overcast and clouded, yea, filled with storms and tempests, lightnings and thunders. His graces, like under-ground flowers in the winter, may all disappear, and hide their beautiful heads. To God he may say, *I am cast*

out of thy sight. I know thou canst do much, but wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? To the promises he may say, 'You are sweet things indeed, but what have I to do with you? I could once, indeed, rejoice in you as my portion; but now I fear that I grasped a shadow, a fancy, instead of you.' To saints he may say, 'Turn away from me; labour not to comfort me. O do not spill your precious ointment of consolation upon my head; for what have I to do with comfort?' To former experiences he may say in his haste, 'You are all liars.' To the light of God's countenance he may say, 'Farewell, sweet light, I shall behold thee no more.' To Satan he may say, 'O mine enemy, thou hast at last prevailed against me; thou art stronger than I, and hast overcome.' To duties and ordinances he may say, 'Where is the sweetness I once found in you? You were once sweeter to me than the honeycomb; but now tasteless.' O sad relapse! deplorable change!

But will God leave his poor creatures helpless in such a case as this? Shall their leaf fall, their branches wither, their joy, their life, their hearts depart? Will he see their graces fainting, their hopes expiring, the things that are in them ready

to die, and will he not regard it? He will regard it. *There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, and the root thereof wax old in the earth, yet by the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant,* Job xiv. 8. This poor declining soul, though it sit thus sad at the gates of hell, may rouse up itself at last, and say to Satan, who stands triumphing over it, *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, for though I fall, yet I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me,* Micah vii. 8. He may raise up himself upon the bed of languishing, and say to God, 'Though thou hast chastened me sore, yet hast thou not given me over unto death.' He may turn about to the saints who have mourned for him, and with a lightsome countenance say, 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.' He may say to the promises, 'You are the true and faithful sayings of God. My unbelief did belie you; I said in my haste you were liars, but I am ashamed of my folly. Surely, O soul, there is yet hope in thine end; thou mayest be restored; thou mayest yet recover thy verdure, and thy dew be as the dew of herbs.'

FLAVEL.

SECTION II.—ON FAITH.

Difference between a life of Faith and a life of Sense.

WHAT is the difference between the life of faith, and the life of sight or sense? The words of the Apostle give ground for this inquiry, when he informs us, that while in the body, *we walk by faith, and not by sight*; and that *the life he lived in the flesh, was a life of faith upon the Son of God*, 2 Cor. v.: by which he plainly intimates, that a life of faith is calculated for an embodied state, and that a life of sight and sense, is not suited unto our present condition here in the wilderness. There are these few things I offer to clear the difference.

1. Sense regards only what a man hath in hand, or presently enjoys; but faith looks to what a man hath in Christ, and in the well-ordered covenant. Sense is like a child that is better pleased with a

penny, or any little trifle the parent gives it, than if he were giving it a charter to the whole estate; but faith, although it will not despise any thing that comes from the hand of the Father, yet it is particularly taken up with the charter of the promise or covenant, and the estate lying in the hand of the great covenant head, Christ Jesus; it views the promise as it is *yea and amen in Christ*; it views the covenant as confirmed by his death and blood, and says, with David, *This is all my salvation that he hath made with me*, in my new covenant head, *an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and sure*.

2. Sense is ready to judge of the love of God by the aspect of Providence, or his present carriage; and whenever he seems to frown or hide, it razes all to the foundation, crying, *The Lord hath forgotten to be gracious*; but faith reads the love of God in the face of Christ Jesus, in the ac-

ceptance that the Surety has met with, and in the declarations, offers, promises, of the word: *In his word will I hope*, says faith; *Remember the word upon which thou hast caused thy servant to hope*. Hence it follows,

3. Sense and sight is a variable and fluctuating thing; but faith is steady and fixed, like Abraham, *who against hope believed in hope, and staggered not at the promise through unbelief*. While the believer lives by sense, and enjoys the Lord in a sensible manner, he is ready then to say, *My mountain stands firm, I shall never be removed*; but anon the Lord *hides his face*, and the man is *troubled*: but faith keeps up a persuasion of his love, even when he is withdrawn, saying, *Though I walk in darkness, I will trust in the name of the Lord, and stay myself upon my God*.

4. Sight and sense look only to things present: but faith, like a prophet, looks at things to come, things that are at a distance. Abraham, the father of the faithful, saw the day of Christ afar off: *Faith is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for*. When under darkness of affliction, desertion, temptation, it will say, *Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness*.

5. Sense and sight are superficial and overly, in their views of things, and easily deceived with appearances: but faith is a poring and diving grace, it goes deep into things. Faith will perceive poison in a cup of gold, it will see lions' dens and leopards in Lebanon, among trees and woods of aromatic scent; and therefore will turn away from them as dangerous, while sense is easily encouraged thereby: and on the other hand it will see a paradise of communion with the Lord in a wilderness, where sense can perceive nothing but prickling briars and thorns. *Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17.

6. They differ in their consort and order. Faith is the leader, and sense the follower; faith is the duty, and sense the privilege connected with it. *After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise*, Eph. i. 12, 13. *Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God?* John xi. 40. Faith

is the work, and sense is the encouragement. This is God's order, which the legal heart would always invert: we would be at the encouragement of sense, before we set about the duty of believing; like Thomas, John xx. 25, *Except I thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe*. But let us remember what Christ says to him, *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*.

7. Sense is hasty and precipitant in its judgment; but faith is patient, and waits till it see the end. Sense draws rash and hasty conclusions when difficulties cast up: *I said in my haste, all men are liars: I said I am cast out of thy sight*. But faith waits till the other side of the cloud cast up: *The Lord is a God of judgment*, says faith; *and blessed are all they that wait for him. The vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry*; hence, *He that believeth, shall not make haste*. The Old Testament saints waited about four thousand years for the coming of the promised seed of the woman; and when they died, they died with the promise in their arms, waiting for the accomplishment, believing that he would come, and would not tarry beyond the fulness of time. *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them*, Heb. xi. 13.

8. A life of sense is dangerous, but a life of faith is sure and safe. The danger of sense appears from the advantage that Satan took to ruin Adam and all his posterity. Had our first parents lived in the steady faith of God's promise and threatening in the covenant of works, they had never eaten of the forbidden tree; but they walked by sight and sense: the fruit was beautiful to the eye, and pleasant to the taste; this made them the more easily to listen to the hisses of the old serpent, saying, *If ye eat, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*; and thus he prevailed. We see that when Paul was filled with sensible manifestations, being rapt up to the third heaven, he was in danger of being lifted up with pride. But now, I say, the life of faith is safe and sure; and the reason is, because it will neither believe angels nor men, if their say does not agree with what God says in his word. It views things as they are laid in the re-

velation, and forms a judgment and estimate of things according to God's verdict of them: *To the law and to the testimony*, says faith: *if they speak not according to God's oracles, it is because there is no truth in them*. Hence faith has the moon under its feet.

This is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith. Faith by going this way to work, makes the soul like mount Zion, which cannot be removed for ever. *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established*, says the prophet unto trembling Israel.

9. Sense has its only foundation and confidence within; it trades in the shallow waters of created grace, experimental attainments, marks of grace, and the like: but faith has its foundation without the man, in Christ, in God's covenant, in the great and precious promises. While the mariner stays in the shallow waters, he is in continual fear of rocks and sand-banks; but when he has launched out into the deep waters he is safe. Faith trades in the deep waters of the fulness of the Godhead that dwells bodily in Christ, *made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*: and so it gets above doubts and racking fears of shipwreck: but it is, I say, otherwise with sense; it deals with created grace, manifestation, experiences, and attainments.

REV. EBEN. ERSKINE.

Mistakes concerning Faith, both in the converted and the unconverted.

THERE is a twofold mistake concerning faith: on the one side, they that are altogether void of it, abusing and flattering themselves in a vain opinion that they have it; and, on the other side, they that have it, misjudging their own condition, and so depriving themselves of much comfort and sweetness that they might find in their believing.

The former is the worse, and yet by far the commoner evil. What Seneca says of wisdom is true of faith, 'Many would seek after it, and attain it, if they did not falsely imagine that they have attained it already.' There is nothing more contrary to the lively nature of faith, than for the soul not to be at all busied with the thoughts of its own spiritual condition; and yet, this very character of unbelief passes with a great many for believing. They doubt not, that is, indeed they consider

not what they are; their minds are not at all on these things; are not awakened to seek diligently after Jesus, so as not to rest till they find him. They are well enough without him; it suffices them to hear there is such a one, but they ask not themselves, is he mine, or no? Surely, if that be all—not to doubt, the brutes believe as well as they. It were better, out of all question, to be labouring under doubtings, if it be a more hopeful condition, to find a man groaning and complaining, than speechless, and breathless, and not stirring at all.

There be in spiritual doubtings two things; there is a solicitous care of the soul concerning its own estate, and a diligent inquiry into it, and that is laudable, being a true work of the Spirit of God; but the other thing in them is, perplexity and distrust arising from darkness and weakness in the soul. Where there is a great deal of smoke, and no clear flame, it argues much moisture in the matter, yet it witnesseth certainly that there is fire there; and therefore, dubious questioning of a man concerning himself, is a much better evidence than that senseless deadness which most take for believing. Men that know nothing in sciences, have no doubts. He never truly believed who was not made first sensible and convinced of unbelief. This is the Spirit's first errand in the world, to *convince it of sin*; and the sin is this, that *they believe not*, John xvi. 8, 9. If the faith that thou hast, grew out of thy natural heart of itself, be assured it is but a weed. The right plant of faith is always set by God's own hand, and it is watered and preserved by him; because exposed to many hazards, he watches it night and day. *I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day*, Isa. xxvii. 3.

Again, how impudent is it in the most to pretend they believe, while they wallow in profaneness! If faith unite the soul unto Christ, certainly it puts it into participation of his Spirit; *for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, says St. Paul. This faith in Christ brings us into communion with God. Now, *God is light*, says St. John; and he therefore infers, *If we say we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth*, 1 John i. 6. The lie appears in our practice, an unsuitableness in our carriage; as one said of him that

signed his verse wrong, 'Fecit solœcismum manu.'

But there be imaginary believers who are a little more refined, who live after a blameless, yea, and a religious manner, as to their outward behaviour, and yet are but appearances of Christians, have not the living work of faith within, and all these exercises are *dead works* in their hands. Amongst these, some may have such motions within them as may deceive themselves, while their external deportment deceives others; they may have some transient touches of desire to Christ, upon the unfolding of his excellences in the preaching of the word, and upon some conviction of their own necessity, and may conceive some joy upon thoughts of apprehending him; and yet all this proves but a vanishing fancy, an embracing of a shadow. And because men who are thus deluded, meet not with Christ indeed, do not really find his sweetness, therefore, within a while, they return to the pleasures of sin, and *their latter end proves worse than their beginning*, 2 Pet. ii. 20. Their hearts could not possibly be steadfast, because there was nothing to fix them on in all that work wherein Christ himself was wanting.

But the truly believing soul that is brought unto Jesus Christ, and fastened upon him by God's own hand, abides stayed on him, and departs not. And in these persons, the very belief of the things that are spoken concerning Christ in the Gospel, the persuasion of divine truth, is of a higher nature than the common consent that is called historical; they have another knowledge and evidence of the *mysteries of the kingdom*, than natural men can have. This is indeed the ground of all, the very thing that causes a man to rest upon Christ, when he hath a persuasion wrought in his heart by the Spirit of God, that Christ is an able Redeemer, a sufficient Saviour, *able to save all that come to him*, Heb. vii. 25. Then, upon this, the heart resolves upon that course; seeing I am persuaded of this, that *whoso believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life*, (or, as it is 1 Pet. ii. 6. *shall not be confounded*) I am to deliberate no longer; this is the thing I must do, I must lay my soul upon him, upon one who is an Almighty Redeemer; and it does so. Now, these first actings of faith have in themselves an evidence that distinguishes

them from all that is counterfeit, a light of their own, by which the soul wherein they are, may discern them, and say, This is the right work of faith; especially when God shines upon the soul, and clears it in the discovery of his own work within it.

And further, they may find the influence of faith upon the affections, *purifying* them, as the Apostle says of it, Acts xv. 9. Faith knits the heart to a holy Head, a pure Lord, the Spring of purity, and therefore cannot choose but make it pure: it is a beam from heaven, that raises the mind to a heavenly temper. Although there are remains of sin in a believing soul, yet it is a hated wearisome guest there. It exists there, not as its delight, but as its greatest grief and malady, which it is still lamenting and complaining of; it had rather be rid of it than gain a world. Thus the soul is purified from the love of sin.

So then, where these are—a spiritual apprehension of the promises, a cleaving of the soul unto Christ, and such a delight in him as makes sin vile and distasteful, so that the heart is set against it, and, as the needle touched with the loadstone, is still turned towards Christ, and looks at him in all estates,—the soul that is thus disposed, hath certainly interest in him; and, therefore, ought not to affect a humour of doubting, but to conclude, that how unworthy soever in itself, yet being in him, *it shall not be ashamed*; not only it shall never have cause to think shame of him, but all its just cause of shame in itself shall be taken away; it shall be covered with his righteousness, and appear so before the Father. Who must not think, if my sins were to be set in order, and appear against me, how would my face be filled with shame! Though there were no more, if some thoughts that I am guilty of were laid to my charge, I were utterly ashamed and undone. Oh! there is nothing in myself but matter of shame, but yet in Christ there is more matter of glorying, who endured shame, that we might not be ashamed. We cannot distrust ourselves enough, nor trust enough in him. Let it be right faith, and there can be no excess in believing. Though I have sinned against him and abused his goodness, yet I will not leave him, *for whither should I go?* He, and none but he, *hath the words of eternal life*. Yea, though he being so often offended, should threaten to leave

me to the shame of my own follies, yet I will stay by him, and wait for a better answer, and I know I shall obtain it; this assurance being given me for my comfort, that *whosoever believes in him shall not be ashamed.* LEIGHTON.

Our need of Faith continual.

FAITH it is which leads the soul to God, and fetches strength from him under every new trial and emergency; there is no living upon past frames or past mercies; a *receiving* life is what every believer lives: *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace,* John i. 16. There must be a daily coming to Christ for grace to help in time of need: *To whom coming, as to a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,* 1 Pet. ii. 4;—to him coming for support, strength, subsistence; faith is one continued act in the soul, it is our daily, our hourly work; our life is in another, not in ourselves; and how is this life maintained? even as animal life is, by spiritual communications from Christ, who is the *Bread of Life*, and the Rock who gives us drink, following us in the wilderness for this very end, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4: *And did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.* All the grace his elect should need to the end of time, was put into his hands, as their Covenant Head, and he was made trustee for it—2 Tim. i. 9: *Who hath saved and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* Faith it is that receives that grace from Christ, whether it be pardon, righteousness, preparation for duty, strength under trials and temptations, peace, comfort, and the like. The Spirit shows the believer first what his needs are, and then directs him to Christ for the supply of them; faith takes hold of, receives, and applies what Christ gives, and so feeds, supports, and sustains the soul. Hence the same things that are spoken of Christ are applied to faith, Gal. ii. 20: *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Never

can we say, *All is well*, when faith sinks: no; then *All these things are against me.* REV. J. HILL.

Difference between Faith and Presumption.

PRESUMPTION is like faith in appearance, but in reality it is very unlike it. Presumption works this way: the presumptuous man may have the mercy in his eye, but he hath no promise in his eye. Take heed to this. If there be strong desires after a mercy, and that mercy not pleaded for as in the promise, there is presumption in that pleading. The reason why believers ask so great things of God, is, because God hath promised so great things to them, 2 Sam. vii. 27. Hence it is that presumption acts ordinarily in pleading with God, not for the main spiritual blessings, but for some outward mercy, that their hearts may be too much set upon. It is about such that believers should watch against this presumptuous boldness. But if the pleading at the throne of grace be about salvation and spiritual blessings, the difference betwixt faith and presumption appears in this: presumption can never plead with God, neither in deep distress, nor in the view of sin; but it is the excellent property of faith, that it can plead with God in both cases—Psal. lxxv. 3: *Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away;* spoken like a believer: and, Psal. cxxx. 3, 4, *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?* (But can David stand? Yes, and he stands on this ground;) *but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared.* There is just cause to suspect that there is presumption in that man's heart, when his boldness is only kept up, when sin is out of sight, and disappears. A believer believes most humbly, and often most strongly, when his sinfulness and unworthiness is best seen: for true boldness of faith is not supported by any good or worth in us, but by what is in Christ. The boldness of faith cannot be entertained with *regarding of iniquity in the heart*, Psal. lxxvi. 18; 1 John iii. 20; yet it can, with the being and seeing of iniquity in both heart and life, Rom. vii. 24, 25; 1 Tim. i. 15. . . .

What then is the boldness allowed in coming to the throne of grace? It must not be an ignorant, peremptory boldness. What must it then be?

The boldness of faith hath this in general in it, that it is grounded and bottomed on somewhat without a man, and on nothing in him. It is grounded on Jesus Christ. It is a great mistake in Christians to think, that they cannot come to the throne of grace with boldness, because of the many infirmities in their hearts, and in their addresses. Your complaint may be just and true; but the inference is not good. Do you never, in your counting your infirmities, put in this great one amongst them in your confessions, the want of boldness of faith? for this boldness stands not in any thing in us, and done by us. We must not come boldly, because we can pray well, and plead hard; we must not think to be heard in heaven, neither because of our *much speaking*, nor well speaking, Matt. vi. 7, as the Pharisees did. The boldness of faith hath a higher, and more noble and firm foundation, even Jesus Christ.

REV. W. TRAILL.

Is it presumption for a child to obey his parents? No. Why? Because it is commanded. So it is commanded for a soul to believe, when all comforts are out of sight; and when he sees nothing but what is contrary to the thing promised. Presumption, properly, is the taking of a thing before it is given, or offered. But in this case the promise is given, and therefore it is no presumption to hold it fast. There is a two-fold presumption which you read of in Scripture; one whereby men rest upon their own works for salvation without Christ; so the Jews did, and therein they presumed upon mercy before it was given to them: another whereby men do as they think, or in their way, rest on Christ for salvation, and yet live without works and obedience: and therein they presume also, because they take mercy when it is not given to them. But if I rest on the promise, on Christ, that I may be made the more holy, and be fruitful in every good work, yet rest upon Christ for all; this is no presumption: Why? Because I do not take mercy before it is offered. And though I hold the promise fast, when I see nothing but what is contrary to the thing promised, yet this is no presumption: Why? Because I do what is commanded; for, says the Apostle, *let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful*

Creator, 1 Pet. iv. 19. Now creation-work is out of nothing; it is light out of darkness. Yet thus are we commanded to commit our souls unto God; and therefore though all fail, and we see nothing of the mercy promised, yet it is not presumption to hold and keep fast the promise.

REV. W. BRIDGE.

The great enmity of carnal Reason to Faith.

PAUL by these words, *Abraham believed*, of faith in God, maketh the chiefest worship, the chiefest duty, the chiefest obedience, and the chiefest sacrifice. Let him that is a rhetorician amplify this place, and he shall see that faith is an almighty thing, and that the power thereof is infinite and inestimable; for it giveth glory unto God, which is the highest service that can be given unto him. Now, to give glory unto God, is to believe in him, to count him true, wise, righteous, merciful, almighty; briefly, to acknowledge him to be the author and giver of all goodness. This reason doth not, but faith. That is it which maketh us divine people, and, as a man would say, it is the creator of certain divinity, not in the substance of God, but in us. For without faith God loseth in us his glory, wisdom, righteousness, truth, and mercy. To conclude: no majesty or divinity remaineth unto God, where faith is not. And the chiefest thing that God requireth of man is, that he giveth unto him his glory and his divinity: that is to say, that he taketh him not for an idol, but for God; who regardeth him, heareth him, sheweth mercy unto him, and helpeth him. This being done, God hath his full and perfect divinity, that is, he hath whatsoever a faithful heart can attribute unto him. To be able therefore to give that glory unto God, is the wisdom of wisdoms, the righteousness of righteousness, the religion of religions, and sacrifice of sacrifices. Hereby we may perceive what an high and excellent righteousness faith is, and so, by the contrary, what an horrible and grievous sin infidelity is.

Whosoever then believeth the word of God, as Abraham did, is righteous before God, because he hath faith, which giveth glory unto God; that is, he giveth to God that which is due to him. For faith saith thus, I believe thee, O God, when thou speakest. And what saith God? Impossible things, if ye believe reason. For what is more impossible, than when God

saith unto Abraham that he should have a son of the barren and dead body of his wife Sarah?

So, if we will follow the judgment of reason, God setteth forth absurd and impossible things, when he setteth out unto us the articles of the Christian faith. Indeed it seemeth to reason an absurd and a foolish thing, that in the Lord's supper is offered unto us the body and blood of Christ, that baptism is the laver of the new birth, and of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, that the dead shall rise in the last day, that Christ the Son of God was conceived and carried in the womb of the Virgin Mary, that he was born, that he suffered the most reproachful death of the cross, that he was raised up again, that he now sitteth at the right hand of God the Father, and that he hath power both in heaven and in earth. For this cause Paul calleth the Gospel of Christ crucified, the word of the cross and foolish preaching (1 Cor. i. 18), which to the Jews was offensive, and to the Gentiles foolish doctrine. Wherefore reason doth not understand that to hear the word of God and to believe it, is the chiefest service that God requireth of us; but it thinketh that those things which it chooseth and doth of a good intent, as they call it, and of her own devotion, please God. Therefore when God speaketh, reason judgeth his word to be heresy, for it seemeth unto it absurd and foolish.

But faith killeth reason, and slayeth that beast which the whole world and all creatures cannot kill. So Abraham killed it by faith in the word of God, whereby seed was promised to him of Sarah, who was barren and now past child-bearing. Unto this word, reason yielded not straightway in Abraham, but it fought against faith in him, judging it to be an absurd, a foolish, and impossible thing, that Sarah, who was now not only ninety years old, but was also barren by nature, should bring forth a son. Thus faith wrestled with reason in Abraham: but herein faith got the victory, killed and sacrificed reason, that most cruel and pestilent enemy of God. So all the godly entering with Abraham into the darkness of faith do kill reason, saying, Reason, thou art foolish, thou dost not favour those things which belong unto God: therefore speak not against me, but hold thy peace. Judge not, but hear the word of God, and believe it. So the godly by faith kill such a

beast as is greater than the whole world, and thereby do offer to God a most acceptable sacrifice and service.

And in comparison of this sacrifice of the faithful, all the religions of all nations are nothing at all. For by this sacrifice, first, as I said, they kill reason, a great and mighty enemy of God. For reason despiseth God, denieth his wisdom, justice, power, truth, mercy, majesty, and divinity. Moreover, by the same sacrifice they yield glory unto God; that is, they believe him to be just, good, faithful, true, &c.; they believe that he can do all things, that all his words are holy, true, lively, and effectual, &c. which is a most acceptable obedience unto God. Wherefore there can be no greater or more holy religion in the world, nor more acceptable service unto God, than faith is.

Contrariwise, the justiciaries, and such as seek righteousness by their own works, lacking faith, do many things. They fast, they pray, they watch, they lay crosses upon themselves. But because they think to appease the wrath of God, and deserve grace by things, they give no glory to God, that is, they do not judge him to be merciful, true, and keeping promise, &c. but to be an angry judge, which must be pacified with works; and by this means they despise God, they make him a liar in all his promises, they deny Christ and all his benefits; to conclude, they thrust God out of his seat, and set themselves in his place. For they, rejecting and despising the word of God, do choose unto themselves such a service of God and such works as God hath not commanded. They imagine that God hath a pleasure therein, and they hope to receive a reward of him for the same. Therefore they kill not reason—that mighty enemy of God, but quicken it; and they take from God his majesty and his divinity, and attribute the same unto their own works. Wherefore only faith giveth glory unto God, as Paul witnesseth of Abraham: *Abraham, saith he, was made strong in the faith, and gave glory to God, being fully assured, that whatsoever God had promised he was able to perform, and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness*, Rom. iv. 20—22.

LUTHER.

The exercise of Faith on the Divine threatenings.

BE persuaded that there are Gospel threatenings intended by Christ for the

use of believers. The laws of Christ must have penalties to enforce them; and they that most believe them, will be most tenderly impressed by them. Christ says to his disciples, *Fear him, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*, Matt. x. 28. And the Apostle exhorts his fellow-saints, *Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it*, Heb. iv. 1. Even justifying and saving faith is much promoted by the belief of God's threatenings. For *by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*, Heb. xi. 7; Mark xvi. 16. Consider the salutary influence of divine threatenings, to glorify God, and engage us to obedience. We are ready to think hardly of God, when we read or hear of the dreadful torments of hell. But there is abundant reason why faith should not only be reconciled to them, but even love and honour, as well as fear God, on account of them. God warns us of them, to keep us from them. And though love must be the chief spring of our obedience, yet such is our nature, that fear must drive us, as well as love draw us. How important are divine threatenings, to keep the world in some tolerable order, and at once demonstrate the wisdom and goodness, the justice and holiness of divine government? If any man should ask, Why will God make so terrible a law? and at the same time should declare, as terrible as it is, I will venture on it, rather than leave my sensual pleasures to engage in a life of holiness; such a one would contradict himself, by showing us that the law is not terrible enough to drive him from his abominable lusts.

Remember how Christ himself verified divine threatenings by his being a sacrifice for sin. *He was manifested to take away our sins, and destroy the works of the devil*, 1 John iii. 5. 8. Now the first and great work of the devil was, to represent God as a liar, and persuade Eve not to believe God's threatenings, and to tell her, that though she sinned, *ye shall not surely die*, Gen. iii. 4. Indeed God so far dispensed with the penalty, as to forgive man the greatest part of it, by laying it on the

Redeemer, that his cross might openly confute the tempter, and assure the world that God is just, and that *the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*, Rom. vi. 23.

Make use of divine threatenings to quicken you to duty, and to strengthen you against temptations. When a temptation is set before you, set hell against it, as well as heaven; and say, Can I take this cup, gratify this lust, grasp at this preferment, together with hell, instead of a part in heaven. If men threaten death, imprisonment, or any other penalty; remember that God threatens hell, which is infinitely more to be dreaded, *where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*, Mark ix. 44. In proportion as love to God, and hatred to sin, prevail in you, you will no more need divine threatenings, than an affectionate wife needs to be forbid to abuse her husband. But the degrees of divine love are imperfect on earth, and therefore all men need to be quickened by the fear of divine threatenings. And thus *the law was not made for a righteous man*; because he fears the threatenings of it, and so falls not under its condemnation.

Remember that all who profess Christianity, have consented to Gospel-threatenings. Every Christian professes to be governed by Christ, and consequently by his laws; and by this law in particular, *He that believeth not, shall be damned*; as well as by that, *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved*. Christ requires your consent to both these laws, or to neither; and why will you embrace the promise, and reject the threatenings, when they are so closely united, and when you yourselves have solemnly consented to both.

Observe that all saving faith contains in it a belief both of Christ's threatenings and promises. Not that all fear of divine threatenings is saving faith. But there are many serious Christians, who believe and tremble at the threatenings, and also truly believe the promises, and yet verily think that they only believe the threatenings, without believing the promises. It is nevertheless manifest, that they believe the promises, as well as the threatenings, because their faith works by love to God, and desire after holiness, and a full enjoyment of God. They would not once suspect their belief of the promises, at the same

time that they are confident of their belief of the threatenings, were it not for their mistaking the nature of true faith, in the manner we have formerly mentioned. Because they believe not that they themselves are pardoned and justified; therefore they think they have no faith in the promises. But though you doubt of your own sincerity, you are still persuaded of the truth of the promises. Now your doubting of your own sincerity, is rather a weakness in your hope, than in your faith; or rather the defect is chiefly in your self-acquaintance. Yet still be more mindful of divine promises, than threatenings. Let all your fear be exercised on the threatenings; but let that be only in order to the fuller exercise of your love, desire, and thankfulness upon the promises. And let your faith interpret all the judgments of God, merely as the threatenings of the Word of God shall direct. The judgments of God may be very dangerously misunderstood; and therefore draw no conclusions concerning them, but what are evidently Scriptural.

BAXTER.

The Christian's Peace in Believing.

Now when this peace, which is made up in heaven, is intimated unto the conscience, then all the tempests and clouds of it vanish; and this is the peace of believing, which is the soul's resting and quieting itself upon the believed favour of God. There may be a great calm above, *good-will in God towards men*, and yet great tempests in this lower region, no peace on earth. There is a peace of conscience, which is a disease of conscience, a benumbedness of conscience, or a sleep of conscience, when men walk in the imagination of their own hearts, and flatter themselves in their own eyes, will not trouble themselves with the apprehension of the wrath of God, when souls will not suffer their sin, or the curse to enter in. This is that *no peace*, which the Lord speaks often of, it is but a dream; and when a man awaketh, alas! what a dreadful sight meets he with first, sudden destruction! Sin enters in the conscience, and the law, the strength of sin; and so that peace endeth in an eternal disquietness: but what is the reason, that notwithstanding of God's justice and men's sins, so many are not afraid of him, so many pass the time without fear of wrath and hell? Is it not because they have taken hold on his strength and made peace

with him? No indeed, but because they know not the power of his anger, to fear him according to his wrath. Who will spend one hour in the examination of his own ways, in searching out sins, in counting his debt, till he find it past payment? No, men entertain the thoughts of sin, and hell and wrath, as if it were coals in their bosom, they shake them out, they like and love any diversion from them. Oh, ignorance maketh much peace, I would say security, which is so much worse than fear, because it is so far from the remedy, that it knoweth not the evil and danger. It is not the rising of the Sun of righteousness, shining into the soul that hath cleared them, but their perpetual darkness that blindeth them. I say then, in the name of Jesus Christ, that ye never knew the peace of God; who knew not war with God; ye know not love, who have not known anger; but this is the soul's true peace and tranquillity, when it is once awakened to see its misery and danger; how many clouds overspread it; what tempests blow; what waves of displeasure go over its head? But when that peace, which is made in the high places, breaketh through the cloud with a voice, *Son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee*; when that voice of the Spirit is uttered, presently at its command the wind and waves obey; the soul is calmed, as the sea after a storm; it is not only untroubled, but it is peaceable upon solid grounds, because of the word which speaks peace in Christ.

PROF. BINNING.

Faith our only support in Trials and Dangers.

ONE thing then is clear, that *our support in dangers and trials depends on our faith*. Not that faith can do any thing of itself to help us; but this is the grace, which peculiarly honours God, and which he is therefore determined to cover with honour wherever he finds it. Other graces may be in some respects of a higher character; hope may be more elevating, and love more disinterested and lasting; but faith submits to God's authority: it lies low at his footstool; gives him there the credit of his faithfulness, his power, and his glory; and then it rises up, and nothing can withstand it. It overcomes the world with its manifold temptations. It smiles at dangers, triumphs over difficulties, rejoices in tribulation, and sings in persecution. Nay, it has controlled the elements,

and changed the course of nature; *subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, turned armies to flight, and raised the very dead to life.* It makes a man while living a wonder to all around him, and when he dies, it saves his soul.

When therefore, in the hour of trial, we renounce the aid of this mighty principle, we shall most certainly sink; the weakest temptation will overpower, the most trifling difficulty discourage, and the slightest danger alarm us. It matters not to what other means of support we may have recourse. We may reason wisely and even piously about our trials, and endeavour to fortify ourselves under them by recollecting all we have heard of the advantages of overcoming and the uselessness of yielding to them; but we shall find that our

fears will not be reasoned away; that the wisest arguments will not make trouble sit easy upon us, nor silence the murmurs of discontent, nor quiet an accusing conscience. Before these effects can be produced, we must discover a more simple and a more powerful instrument of consolation; and where is this to be found? Only in that Gospel, where we are most unwilling to look for it. Other things may keep us thoughtless and hardened in our trials; but we can be made peaceful under them only by a heart-felt belief in the Bible; by that faith, which the men of the world have agreed to misunderstand and despise, but the cheering energy of which thousands of the afflicted children of God are hourly experiencing. *By faith they live; by faith they stand; by faith they walk; by faith they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* REV. C. BRADLEY.

SECTION III.—CAUTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CHRISTIAN.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus, Phil. iii. 12.

ST. PAUL is conscious that Christ has apprehended him; he knows for certain he has apprehended him, yet he follows after to attain; fully sensible that he is very imperfect at present; but he continues doing this one thing as the business of life, even looking steadily to heaven, to Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, to the resurrection of the just, and to a happy and glorious immortality.

From this view of the Apostle's frame of heart, some useful caution and advice may be given to thriving Christians. . . .

Your knowledge, brethren, of your own heart; your care and watchfulness against sin; your earnest desire to please God; joined with the experience of your daily imperfections, will be apt to cast you down, if you be not fortified with just views of the grace of God, and your privileges and real situation as his children. This evil is more to be feared when the malice and subtilty of Satan's devices are taken into the account, against which you are not always sufficiently on your guard. I never

knew a serious Christian, but he was disposed to think that after a course of years he would have been further advanced in holiness than he actually finds himself to be. The fact is, he is, as before, still a sinner; he follows after; he strives; he has an idea of apprehending that for which Christ has apprehended him: sometimes he seems just on the point of having attained it; he seems to be filled with all the fulness of God, and swallowed up with divine love. But,—so it is;—his brightest attainment, even the precious heaven of communion with Christ, is often taken out of his sight, just when he is going to enter, as it were, into full possession. This is his experience through life, so that he never completely hits the mark at which he aims. The flesh weighs him down; some ensnaring temptation intervenes; his sun is clouded; his faith, when strongest, is liable to be assaulted; his hope, when most cheerful and lively, is damped from time to time; and his love has its weaknesses, its declensions, and variations. The flesh mixes itself so continually with all his best experiences and exercises, that no dispositions, no frames, no works whatever, even the very best of them, in his best state on earth, are, properly speaking, perfect. Nay, this is the case with the

most perfect, that is, the most sincere Christians, in whom the principle of grace is the strongest that it is likely to be, on this side of eternity.

Nevertheless I dare not withhold from such the consolation which the Scripture exhibits. I know how needful it is for their growth, their liberty, their thankfulness to God, and their honouring of their Saviour. Brethren, go on with St. Paul; confess humbly, to your own shame, and with an entire renunciation of your own righteousness, that you have not attained nor are perfect. But follow on to apprehend, as he did, that for which Christ apprehended you. Oh! consider what glory, what bliss, what sweetness of enjoyment is before you! You shall in truth apprehend the whole. There is a glorious liberty of the children of God, and a putting off of the bondage of corruption, as you are told in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Doubt not, but earnestly believe that it shall not always be thus. In this life you must hope for that which you see not, and in patience wait for it. St. Paul uses the expression, *Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of your body*. And the same Apostle tells you in the same chapter, that in this life, the Spirit helps your infirmities, and you must bear the warfare till he call you hence. You may with comfort look forward to that glorious hope. Then Christ and you shall be so perfectly united, that you shall never more have any thing to do with sinful flesh; but love shall fill you without interruption for ever.

This is the Scripture view. It carries the mind directly forward to the next life; and not in vain, for your title is firm and sure, not grounded on your own righteousness, but on Christ; not on what measures of grace you attain, but on *the gift of God, which is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*. By faith apply to your High Priest, and his cleansing blood, and most precious intercession, all your days, and you will still have solid peace. Use all means against sin, your most deadly foe. But, *if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins*. The most upright saints have no other dependence than this: fear not to trust to it; and fail not to profit by it.

REV. JOS. MILNER.

The Saint's Imperfections.

WHILE I am in the flesh, I must be encompassed with many infirmities: and while I am in the world, I cannot escape trial and temptation. These things are grievous to my spirit; but I see that they are permitted to wean me from myself, and to draw off my heart from the creatures to my only true refuge in God.

What feebleness, at times, do I not feel in duty; what fickleness and unsteadiness in following my Redeemer; what dulness and distraction in prayer; so that I can hardly remain firm and lively, long together, in the pursuit of that good which my soul most desires and approves. It is a war indeed in my members to get my corrupted nature down, and to have the life of grace warm and vigorous within me. I cannot but groan, at times, in this tabernacle, being burdened and almost oppressed by the evils within and about me.

Were it not for divine help, O what should I do? Like Peter, on the sea, I have sometimes ventured boldly after my Lord; but like him too, through faintness of heart and weakness of faith, at other times, I have cried out, *Lord, save, or I perish!* Thou hast helped me indeed, blessed be thy name, O my God: and yet I cannot but reproach myself for the cold forgetfulness and weakness of my spirit, in doubting so often of thy faithfulness, and in not keeping hold of thy promises.

Thus, Lord, I feel myself a poor, a frail, and altogether a weak and worthless man, fit for nothing but thy mercy, and capable of nothing when left to my own nature, but rebellion against it. When I survey myself, and all my confused and ruined faculties, I am filled with shame, and cannot but wonder at thy long-suffering towards me. O wretch that I am, in what a vile body of sin do I live! How am I always struggling against thee with my perverse and wicked flesh, contrary to the true and lasting interests of my soul? How ready to yield to thine enemy and mine; or to give up all for lost rather than maintain the hard and painful struggle with corruption and sin?

When I have been lively and zealous for my God, how often have I been ready to overlook, to misapply, or to turn his grace to the foolish vanity of my own mind? Insomuch, at times, I seem all flesh to myself, and to have neither true

light, life, wisdom, nor strength from above within me. My failures are and have been so numerous, the apostacy of my heart so great, the conduct of my life and temper so immutable and irregular, and all my frame so poor and wavering, so cold and weak in embracing the best things, that I am ready to bemoan with the Prophet, *Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips! My whole head is sick, and my whole heart is faint.*

Others may talk of their wills and their powers, their duties and their deserts; but, as for me, I can scarcely lift up my eyes to heaven when I consider myself: rather with the publican my brother, I must smite upon my breast and say, *God be merciful to me a sinner!* Instead of looking on myself as a fine holy creature, who can appear confidently before my God, I shrink with contrition and shame at the thought that I have done little else than dishonour him all my days, and deserve nothing for the best thing I was ever able to do, but confusion and sorrow.

O what plague is discovered in a man's own heart, when he knows himself; and how little doth he appear in his own eyes, when he hath been made to view, in some true light and degree, the piercing purity and perfections of God.

And yet, O marvellous to say, God is pleased, by all the weak and contrary things in me, to magnify his own power and glory. By these he makes me out of humour with myself; by these he drives me from a thousand refuges of lies; by these he compels me to cleave unto him, as my only rock, succour, and remedy. In this way I can feel, as well as read, what the Apostle meant where he says, *Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me; for when I am weak, then I am strong.* These are strange paradoxes to the natural heart; but blessed is the man who can truly understand and enter into their sweet sense and experience.

AMB. SERLE.

The Saint's Sense of Corruption.

I BELIEVE, that I was conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity; and that ever since, I have been continually conceiving mischief and bringing forth vanity.

This article of my faith I must of necessity believe whether I will or not, for if I could not believe it to be true, I should

therefore have the more cause to believe it to be so; because, unless my heart was naturally very sinful and corrupt, it would be impossible for me not to believe that which I have so much cause continually to bewail; or, if I do not bewail it, I have still the more cause to believe it, and therefore am so much the more persuaded of it, by how much the less I find myself affected with it. For certainly I must be a hard-hearted wretch indeed, steeped in sin and fraught with corruption to the highest, if I know myself so oft to have incensed the wrath of the most high God against me, as I do, and yet not be sensible of my natural corruption, nor acknowledge myself to be by nature a child of wrath, as well as others; for I verily believe, that the want of such a due sense of myself argues as much original corruption, as murder and whoredom do actual pollution. And I shall ever suspect those to be the most under the power of that corruption, that labour most by arguments to divest it of its power.

And therefore, for my own part, I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to go about to confute that by wilful arguments, which I find so true by woful experience. If there be not a bitter root in my heart, whence proceeds so much bitter fruit in my life and conversation? Alas! I can neither set my head nor heart about any thing, but I still show myself to be the sinful offspring of sinful parents, by being the sinful parent of a sinful offspring; nay, I do not only betray the inbred venom of my heart by poisoning my common actions, but even my most religious performances also, with sin. I cannot pray, but I sin; I cannot hear or preach a sermon, but I sin; I cannot give an alms or receive the sacrament, but I sin; nay, I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my very confessions are still aggravations of them, my repentance needs to be repented of, my tears want washing, and the very washing of my tears needs still to be washed over again with the blood of my Redeemer. Thus not only the worst of my sins, but even the best of my duties, speak me a child of Adam. Insomuch that whensoever I reflect upon my past actions, methinks I cannot but look upon my whole life, from the time of my conception to this very moment, to be but as one continued act of sin.

And whence can such a continued stream

of corruption flow, but from the corrupt cistern of my heart? And whence can that corrupt cistern of my heart be filled, but from the corrupt fountain of my nature? Cease therefore, O my soul, to gainsay the power of original sin within thee, and labour now to subdue it under thee. But why do I speak of my subduing this sin myself? Surely this would be both an argument of it, and an addition to it. It is to thee, O my God, who art both the searcher and cleanser of hearts, that I desire to make my moan! It is to thee I cry out in the bitterness of my soul, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Who shall? Oh! who can do it, but thyself? Arise thou therefore, O my God, and show thyself as infinitely merciful in the pardoning, as thou art infinitely powerful in the purging away my sins! BP. BEVERIDGE.

The Deceits of Self even in our most spiritual Exercises.

As they that are in the flesh, cannot please God at all; so they, that follow the flesh in any instance, do so far displease him. This flesh is a subtle adversary, and will creep into our duties as well as our sins; mixing itself under a thousand forms into almost all that we can say, or think, or do.

Who could expect to feel this deceiver in the deepest contrition of the soul, or to find him in peals of groans and showers of tears? Yet self will endeavour to make a man proud of this very humility, be plumed upon his own abasements, and be fancying himself something in the midst of his confessions about his vileness and nothing.

A poor soul shall own itself, with much pain and sincerity, to be a miserable sinner; and self, from this very acknowledgment, will stir up a notion of worth in the creature, and give it to believe that there are some seeds at least of excellency within itself, which others have not, and for having of which he is higher or better than they. Self will bid some men confess themselves sinners, that they may be considered as saints. To take them at their word, would mortify and displease them.

When the heart of the believer is melted in duty, and enjoys the liveliest frame of communion and love; how often and how much is self to be found therein, either attempting to puff up with an high opinion,

or to instil a carnal security concerning its spiritual interest and welfare? If it can abate the power and watchfulness of faith, it will lay a ground of distress to the believer in the next trial; so that he will soon find himself to be yet in the flesh, and that, as one says, 'He must never think to put off his armour till he is ready for others to put on his shroud.'

A man may appear excellent in religious conversation, and be eminent in public duties: he may speak and write much, and perhaps well, upon the things of God, and may recommend them with zeal to others; and yet, so much of self may be in all, that when he looks over his heart and discovers it, he will rather find reason to be ashamed of the whole, than to be satisfied with any one part of it. . . .

In success of duty for God, and in being the instrument of good to others, this selfishness of our hearts will endeavour, if not to rob God entirely of his glory, yet at least to share with him in it. Self will be pleased, because we ourselves have been concerned, because we have been honoured, and because by us the Lord hath been magnified in the souls of others. It is self which is vexed when this is not the case, and when we have toiled for nothing, or others have caught the fishes. Whereas our spirit should rejoice in the will of the Lord, and be as much pleased when his work prospers in other hands, as in our own. And thus indeed they would rejoice, if this corrupt self did not mix with and seek its own establishment in the most spiritual exercises of our souls. We too much forget, that we are only instruments, and that we can do no more of ourselves for God, than our pens can write down our thoughts, when not taken up by our hands.

All this may serve to shew, what a severe jealousy we should hold concerning ourselves. We should not only pray, but watch unto prayer; we should both perform our religious duties with zeal, and should examine well the zeal with which we perform them; we should abound in every work and labour of love, and should entreat for wisdom and grace, that flesh and self may not abound in them too; we should ask again and again for a single eye and a simple heart, that all the glory of every good may be given to God, its right owner; and that we may be kept in our true place, admiring

his mercy, and shewing forth, with humble simplicity, his honour and praise.

AMB. SERLE.

The more Grace we have the deeper our sense of Sin.

HE who is possessed of the greatest portion of grace, is the most clearly convinced of the height to which his affections should ascend, and is the most deeply affected with the low degree in which they are exercised. And therefore, estimating his love by the extent of his obligation, he is astonished at its smallness.

The eminent saint, having such a view of the high degree in which he ought to love God, perceives more clearly, not only the smallness of his grace, but the greatness of his remaining corruption. In order to ascertain how much depravity, or sin remains within us, we must regard that height to which the rule of our duty extends; the whole of the distance between that elevation, and our affections is sin, for in exact proportion as we fall short of our duty, we sin, and evidence the depravity of our hearts. Sin is an abominable defect, and appears so to the saints, especially to those who are eminent saints. . . .

And the more a person possesses of true grace and spiritual light, the more will he feel his infinite deformity as a sinner, and the want of moral beauty in his graces and experience. Indeed, our goodness, comparatively, is less than a drop in the ocean, for finite bears no proportion to infinite; and the more spiritual light we possess, the more do things appear, in this respect, as they really are. Hence it is evident, that true grace is of such a nature, that the more a person possesses of it, the less does his moral beauty appear in comparison with his deformity.

The tendency of high religious affections, in some persons with whom I have been acquainted, is to hide the depravity of their hearts, and to leave them without complaint as to the remains of moral depravity. This is a certain proof that their discoveries, as they call them, proceed from darkness and not from light. It is true, that saving discoveries may, for the present, hide depravity, as they restrain its positive exercises. They do, however, bring it to light as to what is privative,—our want of love, of humility, of gratitude, &c. These defects appear most hateful in

the view of those who are most eminently gracious; and whatever positive effects of depravity at any time appear, and mingle themselves with the actings of grace, they will, from these circumstances, be exceedingly magnified, and rendered far more detestable.

I would not, however, be understood to mean that the saints on earth have, in all respects, the worst opinion of themselves, when they possess most of the exercise of grace. In many respects the case is otherwise. As to the positive effects of depravity, it will be evident to the real Christian, that he is freest from them when grace is most in exercise, and least so when the actings of grace are most feeble. And when he compares his experience at one time, with his experience at another, he will be convinced that when grace is in lively exercise, it is better with him than when he is in a dull and languid frame. When he sinks in the frame of his mind, he will be sensible of the declension, and thus have a striking proof of his remaining depravity. But still it is evident from the considerations already mentioned, that the children of God never have such spiritual views of their deformity and vileness, as when they possess most of the exercise of true grace; and are never so much disposed to place themselves low amongst Christians, as when they are living near to God. Thus he who is greatest in the kingdom of Christ, is the least in his own estimation, Matt. xviii. 4.

PRES. EDWARDS.

Sin can never be forgotten by pardoned Sinners.

THERE are men who contend that pardoned sin should be forgotten. They know no more of the power of godliness than a stone. It can never be forgotten. As soon as it is cancelled in heaven, it is written with a pen of iron, fixed in the memory for ever. The murderer may forget his crimes, Judas his treason, and all hell its rebellion; but as long as the pardoned have minds that can work, and hearts that can feel, not all the sorrows of life, nor all the joys of heaven, nor all the ages of eternity, can blot out the remembrance of their guilt or weaken its power. It is as lasting as pardon itself. A sense of pardon keeps it alive. A man never rightly feels himself a sinner, till he looks with an eye of faith on Christ as his Saviour; till he be-

gins to hope that wrath is escaped and heaven won.

Then shall ye remember your own evil ways and your doings that were not good, says the Lord to Israel. And when was this remembrance to begin? Not till he had *saved them from all their uncleanness*; not till he had said to them, *Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

Look at the prodigal. *When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.* And what was the effect of all this tenderness? The very effect which the enjoyment of redeeming love produces in every breast. The first words which came from that contrite rebel, were a confession of his guilt. The son said unto him, *Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*

And look higher. Why is that new song in heaven so loud? Why are the pardoned the most fervent there in their hosannahs and praise? Because they know that they are pardoned. They have taken up into heaven a remembrance of the sins which they committed upon earth; they compare their former state with their present: they see something of the amazing love which has saved them; and though the voice of all the angels were silenced, they could not hold their peace. They would still make the courts of heaven ring with this one sound, *Salvation.* They would still say, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us.* They would still cry aloud, *Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, be glory and dominion for ever.*

REV. C. BRADLEY.

Self-examination.

WHAT am I? It needs no inquiry, but it calls for serious consideration, that I am a reasonable creature, lower than the angels, higher than the brutes; capable of knowing, serving and glorifying God in this world, and of seeing and enjoying him in a better. I am made for my Creator, and am accountable to him: this I am; God grant that I may not have such a noble and excellent being in vain! But here this question has another meaning. All the children of men, by the fall of the first Adam, are become sinners; some of the children of men, by the grace of the second Adam, are become saints; some re-

main in a state of nature, others are brought into a state of grace; some are sanctified, others unsanctified. This is a distinction which divides all mankind, and which will last when all other divisions and subdivisions shall be no more. Now when I ask, what am I?—the meaning is, which of these two do I belong to? Am I in the favour of God, or under his wrath and curse? Am I a servant of God, or a slave to the world and the flesh? whither am I going? to heaven or hell? If I should die this night, and I am not sure to live till to-morrow, whither would death bring me? where would death lodge me? In endless light, or in utter darkness?

It highly concerns us all to be strict and impartial in this inquiry. What will it avail us to deceive ourselves? God cannot be imposed upon, though men may. . . . Therefore that I may discover what my spiritual state is, let me seriously inquire—

1. What choice have I made? Have I chosen God's favour for my felicity and satisfaction, or the pleasures of sense and the wealth of this world? Since I came to be capable of acting for myself, have I made religion my deliberate choice? Have I chosen God for my portion, Christ for my Master, the Scripture for my rule, holiness for my way, and Heaven for my home and everlasting rest? If not, how can I expect to have what I never chose?

2. What change have I experienced? When I ask—am I a child of wrath, or a child of love; I must remember that I was by nature a child of wrath; now can I witness to a change, though I cannot exactly tell the time and manner, and steps of that change. Time was when I minded nothing but pleasure, or nothing but the business of this world; when I never seriously thought of God, and Christ, and my soul, and another world; but now it is otherwise; I see a reality in invisible things; I find an alteration in my care and concern; and now I ask more solicitously, *What shall I do to be saved?* than ever I asked, *What shall I eat, or what shall I drink, or wherewithal shall I be clothed?* Time was, when this vain and carnal heart of mine had no relish at all of holy ordinances, took no delight in them, called them a task and a weariness; but now it is otherwise; I love to be alone with God, and though I bring little to pass, yet I love to be doing in his service. If I have indeed experienced such a change as

this, grace, free grace must have the glory of it, and I may take the comfort of it; but if I have not found any such work wrought in my heart, if I am still what I was by nature, vain, and carnal, and careless; if Jordan run still in the old channel, and was never yet driven back before the ark of the covenant; I have reason to suspect the worst of myself. If all go one way, without struggle or opposition, it is to be feared it is not the right way.

3. What is the bent of my affections? The affections are the pulse of the soul: if we would know its state, we must observe how that pulse beats. How do I stand affected to sin? Do I dread it as most dangerous, loathe it as most odious, and complain of it as most grievous? or do I make a light matter of it, as the madman who casts firebrands, arrows and death, and says, 'Am not I in sport?' Which lies heavier, the burden of sin, or the burden of affliction? and which am I most desirous to be eased of? What do I think of Christ? How do I stand affected to him? Do I love him and prize him, as 'the fairest of ten thousand' in himself, and the fittest of ten thousand for me? or has he, in mine eyes, no form nor comeliness; and is he no more than another beloved?—How do I stand affected to the word and ordinances? Are God's tabernacles amiable with me; or are they despicable? Am I in God's service as in my element; as one who calls it a delight? or am I in it, as under confinement, and as one that calls it a drudgery?—How do I stand affected to good people? Do I love the image of Christ wherever I see it; though it be in rags, or though not in my own colour? Do I honour them that fear the Lord, and choose his people for my people in all conditions? or do I prefer the gaieties of the world, before the beauties of holiness?—How do I stand affected to this world? Is it under my feet, where it should be; or in my heart, where Christ should be? Do I value it, and love it, and seek it with a prevailing concern? or do I look upon it with a holy contempt and indifference? Which have the greater command over me, those riches, honours, and pleasures that are worldly, or those that are spiritual and divine?—How do I stand affected to the other world? Do I dread eternal misery in a world of spirits, more than the greatest temporal calamities here in this world of sense? Do I desire

eternal happiness in a future state, more than the highest contentments and satisfactions this present state can pretend to? or are the things of the other world, though sure and near, looked upon as doubtful and distant, and consequently little?

4. What is the course and tenour of my conversation? The *tree is known by its fruits*. Do I work the works of the flesh, or bring forth the fruits of the Spirit? Do I allow myself in any known sin, under the cloak of a visible profession? Dare I, upon any provocation, swear or curse, or profane God's holy name, and therein speak the language of his enemies? Dare I, upon any allurement, to please my appetite, or please my company, drink to excess, and sacrifice my reason, honour, and conscience, to that base and brutish lust? Dare I defile a living temple of the Holy Ghost by adultery, fornication, uncleanness, or any act of lasciviousness? Dare I tell a lie for my gain or reputation? Dare I go beyond, or defraud my brother in any matter, cheat those I deal with, or oppress those I have the advantage of? Dare I deny relief to the poor that really need it, when it is in the power of my hand to give it? Dare I bear malice to any, and study revenge? If so, I must know that these 'are not the spots of God's children.' If this be the life I live, I am certainly a stranger to the life of God.

Thus we must examine our spiritual state; and that the trial may come to an issue, we must earnestly pray to God to discover us to ourselves, and must be willing to know the truth of our case; and the result must be this—if we find cause to fear that our spiritual state is bad, and that we are unsanctified and unregenerate; we must give all diligence to get the matter mended. If our state be not good, yet, thanks be to God, it may be made good: *there is hope in Israel concerning this thing*. If we find cause to hope that our spiritual state is good, we must take the comfort of it, and give God the praise; and not hearken to the tempter, when he would disturb our peace, and hinder our progress by calling it in question. God keep us all both from deceiving ourselves with groundless hopes, and from quieting ourselves with groundless fears.

MATT. HENRY.

Consider the temper of thy heart towards spiritual things, the word and ordi-

nances of God, whether thou dost esteem highly of them, and delight in them; whether there be compliance of the heart with divine truths, something in thee, that suits and sides with them against thy corruptions; whether in thy affliction thou seekest not to the puddles of earthly comforts, but hast thy recourse to the sweet crystal streams of the divine promises, and findest refreshment in them. It may be, at some times, in a spiritual distemper, holy exercises and ordinances will not have that present sensible sweetness to a Christian, that he desires; and some will for a long time lie under dryness and deadness this way; yet, there is here an evidence of this spiritual life, that thou stayest by thy Lord, and reliest on him, and wilt not leave these holy means, how sapless soever to thy sense for the present. Thou findest for a long time little sweetness in prayer, yet thou prayest still, and, when thou canst say nothing, yet offerest at it, and lookest towards Christ thy life. Thou dost not turn away from these things to seek consolation elsewhere, but as thou knowest that life is in Christ, thou wilt stay till he refresh thee with new and lively influence. It is not any where but in him; as St. Peter said, *Lord, whither should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life*, John vi. 68.

Consider with thyself, whether thou hast any knowledge of the growth or deficiencies of this spiritual life; for it is here but begun, and breathes in an air contrary to it, and lodges in a house that often smokes and darkens it. Canst thou go on in formal performances, from one year to another, and make no advancement in the inward exercises of grace, and retest thou content with that? It is no good sign. But art thou either gaining victories over sin, and further strength of faith and love, and other graces, or, at least, art thou earnestly seeking these, and bemoaning thy wants and disappointments of this kind? Then, thou livest. At the worst, wouldst thou rather grow this way, be further off from sin, and nearer to God, than grow in thy estate, or credit, or honours? Esteemest thou more highly of grace than of the whole world? There is life at the root; although thou findest not that flourishing thou desirest; yet, the desire of it is life in thee. And, if growing this way, art thou content, whatsoever is thy outward estate? Canst thou solace thyself

in the love and goodness of thy God, though the world frown on thee? Art thou unable to take comfort in the smiles of the world, when his face is hid? This tells thee thou livest, and that he is thy life.

Although many Christians have not so much sensible joy, yet they account spiritual joy and the light of God's countenance the only true joy, and all other without it madness; and they cry, and sigh, and wait for it. Meanwhile, not only duty and the hopes of attaining a better state in religion, but even love to God, makes them to do so, to serve, and please, and glorify him to their utmost. And this is not a dead resting without God, but it is a stable compliance with his will in the highest point; waiting for him, and living by faith, which is most acceptable to him. In a word, whether in sensible comfort or without it, still, this is the fixed thought of a believing soul, *It is good for me to draw nigh to God*, Psa. lxxiii. 28;—only good; and it will not live in a willing estrangedness from him, what way soever he be pleased to deal with it.

LEIGHTON.

The constant need the Believer has of Christ.

MAKE use of Christ constantly. There may be such a weakness amongst some believers, that they think, that when they began first upon godliness, they stood in need daily of the High Priest, they are weak and feeble: but after they have got a great deal of experience, they hope that that experience and the means of grace may do pretty well with them. And that is the reason, why so many do so very ill. No Christian can ever outlive the necessity of employing Christ as High Priest in all the steps of his life and in the last step through death we must still lean upon this High Priest; we go by our High Priest within the vail, leaning and going through the vail of his flesh. And truly I am afraid, (the Lord prevent it in you mercifully and graciously;) I am afraid of some Christians, that their best acts of faith on Christ Jesus are at their last, that their believing through the course of their pilgrimage is a little mingled and mixed with something of themselves; and when they come to the awful and dreadful step, and look death and judgment in the face, then they throw all away to the moles and bats; then their renouncing their own righteousness is no great business to a believer. . . .

You may know if you have Christ thus ; if you have daily work for him, you have him ; for if you understand it rightly, it is a certain truth, that the employing of Christ is the possessing of him, the employing of him is the enjoying of him. It is impossible, that any can employ Christ in any part of his office, that has not Christ in that office really bestowed upon them. If, therefore, you have Christ, this will unavoidably be ; you have an evidence, that you have him by this, that you have daily work for this great High Priest, you need the sprinkling of his blood for your daily transgressions, and need the efficacy of his grace for your daily wants. Never bid a worse sign for a man that has not Christ, than that he has no sense of the want of him. He that has no work for Christ, is yet without God and Christ in the world ; and a poor believer that groans in a sense of his need of Christ, is oftentimes discouraged, when it should be an argument of encouragement. Believers, if they be lively and growing, will find the universal sense of all of them is this : In truth I find I have far more need of Christ than I had twenty, thirty years ago. As his fulness is discovered, and our emptiness discovered to us, our employing him does increase, as well as our enjoyment of him.

REV. R. TRAILL.

What it is to be built on Christ.

To be built on Christ, is plainly to believe in him. But in this the most deceive themselves ; they hear of great privileges and happiness in Christ, and presently imagine it as all theirs, without any more ado ; as that madman of Athens, who wrote up all the ships that came into the haven, for his own. We consider not what it is to believe in him, nor what is the necessity of this believing, in order that we may be partakers of the salvation that he hath wrought. It is not they that have heard of him, or that have some common knowledge of him, or that are able to discourse of him, and speak of his person and nature aright, but, *they that believe in him*. Much of our knowledge is like that of the poor philosopher, who defineth riches exactly, and discourseth of their nature, but possesseth none ; or we are as a geometrician, who can measure land exactly in all its dimensions, but pos-

sesseth not a foot thereof. And truly it is but a lifeless unsavoury knowledge that men have of Christ by all books and study, till he reveal himself and persuade the heart to *believe in him*. Then, indeed, when it sees him, and is made one with him, it says of all the reports it heard, I heard much, yet *the half was not told me*. There is in lively faith, when it is infused into the soul, a clearer knowledge of Christ and his excellency than before, and with it, a recumbency of the soul upon him as the foundation of its life and comfort ; a resolving to rest on him, and not to depart from him upon any terms.— Though I be beset on all hands, be accused by the law, and by mine own conscience, and by Satan, and have nothing to answer for myself, yet, here I will stay, for I am sure in him there is salvation, and no where else. All other refuges are but lies, (as it is expressed in the words of the prophet Isaiah,) poor base shifts that will do no good. God hath laid this precious stone in Sion for this very purpose, that weary souls may rest upon it ; and why should not I make use of it according to his intention ? He hath not forbid any, how wretched soever, to believe, but commands it, and himself works it where he will, even in the vilest sinners.

Think it not enough that you know this stone is laid, but see whether you are built on it by faith. The multitude of imaginary believers lie round about it, but they are never the better nor the surer for that, any more than stones that lie loose in heaps near unto a foundation, but are not joined to it. There is no benefit to us by Christ without union with him ; no comfort in his riches without an interest in them, and a title to them by virtue of that union. Then is the soul right, when it can say, *He is altogether lovely*, and as the Spouse, Cant. ii. 16, *he is mine, my well-beloved*. This union is the spring of all spiritual consolations. And faith, by which we are thus united, is a divine work. He that laid this foundation in Sion with his own hand, works likewise with the same hand faith in the heart, by which it is knit to this corner-stone. It is not so easy as we imagine, to believe. See Eph. i. 19. Many that think they believe, are, on the contrary, like those of whom the Prophet speaks, as *hardened in sin* and carnally

secure, whom he represents as in covenant with hell and death, walking in sin, and yet promising themselves impunity.

ABP. LEIGHTON.

We do not stand by the Grace that is in us, but only by the Grace that is in Christ.

You should know where your standing is, what foundation you stand upon. All grace comes from Christ Jesus; and the end of his giving of grace is, that he may be more improved and used by his people; for all the saving graces of the Spirit of God, are but like so many various tools and instruments, by which the new creature acts towards its original. Now, here is a woful course of a great many; when Christ bestows his grace, grace many a time is put in his own room; when he makes his grace to dwell in us, we are apt to forget that our standing is in himself alone, that created, and infused, and dispensed the grace that is lodged in us. As we are made vessels of grace, we are as feeble as ever; no dispensation of grace was ever given in this world for that end; and if it be used for that end, it is grossly abused. That a believer should live the less dependent upon Jesus Christ, is a snare that you have great need all of you to take good heed of, and beware of. Remember that you do not live, and that you do not stand by the grace that is in you, but only by the grace that is in him. Our strength stands in the fountain: *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* A believer thinks himself exceeding weak, when he can see nothing of Christ's grace in himself; but that is a great mistake; that man is exceeding weak indeed, that can see no grace in Christ Jesus; that man is fallen wofully. How excellently does the Apostle speak of it: *Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then am I strong,* 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. It is best with me when I am nothing. What a mighty word is that, *Though I be nothing!* ver. 11.

REV. R. TRAILL.

Paul, in his temptation, 2 Cor. xii. 7—9, betakes himself to the right course—to prayer to the Lord! and *thrice he besought the Lord, that it might depart from him.* He is answered, *My grace is sufficient for*

thee. We would be apt to think, that Paul's great stock of grace, and manifold experience, and his late extraordinary enjoyment, might have been sufficient to have supported Paul in his conflict. No: they could not. Our Lord saith not, 'Thy grace is sufficient for thee, which I have abundantly bestowed on thee,' but, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* So the Apostle exhorts another, 2 Tim. ii. 1, *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus;* and Eph. vi. 10. There are many *enemies of the grace of God*, because few are partakers of it. Such as have not felt the power of it on their own hearts, will always pick quarrels with the pure doctrine of grace. Some cannot receive this plain Gospel-truth, that a man must be constituted righteous in the sight of God, only through the righteousness of another person, even Jesus Christ, imputed to the sinner of free grace. And some that own this truth, stumble again on this other truth, that the sanctification of a justified believer flows from the constant supplies of grace from Christ, their head and root. They think that there are habits of grace implanted in the new creature, (and this is not to be denied,) and if they guide well what they have received in the grace of regeneration, they may live well, and grow on to perfection. But it is not duly minded in men's spiritual exercise, that no stock of grace was ever given to any believer, to take him off the sense of his need of daily dependence on the original grace in Christ Jesus. But the greatest receivers always act their dependence most humbly, and see their need of it most clearly, and find the benefit of that dependence most comfortably. . . .

Be satisfied, that this grace which is your supply, is all in Christ Jesus, and not in your own hand. Since Adam fell, and ruined himself and all his posterity, by having his and their stock in his own hand, and sinning it away, the Lord, in mercy, hath resolved never to entrust a mere man again with his own stock; but hath lodged all the grace his people are saved and supplied by, in Christ's hand. And there it is safe. Adam was created perfect, and had a sufficient stock to have enriched himself and all his offspring; but he was left to his free will, and so came on it. This is an eternal disgrace to man's free will. What must the free will of a sinner be able to do, when the free will of perfect sinless

man opened the door to sin, and death, and ruin, upon the whole world of mankind? It is therefore graciously and wisely provided, that free will shall have no hand in the salvation of sinners, (and, indeed, free will to good, is but a vain name, usurped by willing and wilful slaves of sin;) and that in its stead, the free grace of God in Jesus Christ shall be, and do, all in all. But we are so proud, that we would fain have somewhat in our own hand; and are so used to sense, and unskilful in believing, that we can hardly reckon that our own, that is not in our possession, and at our disposing. But, in this order, the Lord consults the interest of his glory, and the security of our salvation, and daily supplies, by lodging our all in Christ's hand; who is able to keep it safely for us, and ready and willing to give forth of it to us, according to our real necessity.

REV. R. TRAILL.

Nor do we suppose that inherent grace in the saints has a sufficiency of ability in itself to endure the greatest and severest trials that can befall it in this world. It is certain that it shall be carried safely through all, but not in its own strength and ability. This is a true observation of the learned Gerson, 'The most perfect creature left to itself will fall into ruin.' This was exemplified in the angels that fell, and in Adam, though in a perfect state. Divine preservation is the prop which supports the best creatures from ruin. Grace itself is but a creature, and therefore a dependent being. It is but a stream, depending upon the supply of the fountain. If the fountain let not forth itself, what becomes of the stream? That is a true and judicious observation of the learned Dr. Ames, 'The perseverance of believers, or the immutability of their condition, if we view the whole ground and reason of it, is not wholly from within or wholly from without itself; but partly from the nature of the spiritual life which flows from Christ into them, and partly from the keeping, protection, and direction of God.' That protection is always afforded to this life of grace; and this life of grace always needs that protection. The best of men are but men at best. It was not Peter's grace and resolution that kept him, but Christ's care of him and intercession for him, Luke xxii. 32. *Be strong in the Lord, says the Apostle, and in the*

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power of his might, Eph. vi. 10. *Without me*, says Christ, *ye can do nothing*, John xv. 5.

FLAVEL.

The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death. Hence, *he is our life*. A sinner who is alive to God, must first have been quickened by his grace; and that grace alone, in continual communication, preserves the life which it has imparted. Though partakers of quickening grace in regeneration, such is the power of sin, that we need a continual supply. From the highest exercises of grace, all would soon degenerate again into the corruption of sin, if it were not for the droppings of this precious *Myrrh* from the Tree of Life. If it were not for the constant supplies which he promises, and which he faithfully communicates to his people, the spiritual life would soon die again; it has no innate independent principle of vitality. Daily experience convinces the believer of his total dependence upon Christ, who is his life, and the Spirit of life in him. His only security is, that *his life is hid with Christ in God*. Therefore he never lives aright, either for the peace of his conscience, the sanctification of his heart, or the holiness of his walk, but as *he lives in the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit*; or, as *he lives the life which he now lives in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God*. Blessed Jesus! ever dwell in my heart by these enlivening influences of thy grace; let faith receive and enjoy thee, and render thee the glory of every gift of grace.

REV. W. GOODE.

On False and True Peace.

ONE petition in the Litany hath dwelt much on my mind—'O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.' I am fearful of receiving peace from any but Christ; or in any other way, than by having my sins taken away. I believe that much of the ease and quietness of my mind proceeds rather from false peace and carnal security, than from the peace derived from Christ. Time often wears off the sense of guilt, and the accusations of conscience frequently die away. Attention to other things often drives my sins into obscurity and forgetfulness. And hence proceeds my peace of mind. This, I fear, has been the case too often. I see and feel the

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danger of such things happening. The artifices of Satan, and the deceitfulness of my own heart, can find no plan more ruinous and fatal to my soul. Hence proceeds, more or less, my daily neglect of Christ. I am healed without him; and therefore he is not sought after. I hope to be above all things watchful against this ruinous evil in future. I will endeavour to keep my sins in view in all their guilt, and to have a continual feeling sense of what is due to them, till the Lamb of God takes them away, and grants me his peace. I think that I would freely prefer any misery to this false peace and carnal security; and would willingly live without peace, unless I can receive it from the hands of Christ. What, receive peace from the devil! God forbid. Rather let me endure any misery from the hand of God. Our dealing should be with God only; and we should receive nothing but what he is pleased to give. Our ears should be open to none but Christ, whom the Father hath commanded us to hear. When he speaketh peace, then, and not till then, let us receive it. Let us seek and wait for it; but never take it, till the Lamb of God takes away sin, and grants us his peace. When we receive it from him, it is effectual. It comforts, it refreshes, it strengthens the soul; and it will endure in the sight of sin, guilt, death, and hell. His peace is peculiar: no one can either give or take it away. It is worth seeking and worth waiting for.

REV. T. CHARLES.

Peace with God in the Conscience and Love to God in the Heart inseparably connected.

Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us. . . .

In this delightful portion of Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us, how he brings sinners to know that God loves them. It is by believing in the righteousness and atonement of the Son of God. Hence spring peace and love—peace with God in the conscience, and love to God in the heart. There is an inseparable connexion between those two graces: the one cannot exist without the other. Whoever knows the God of peace, will find that God is love: for being justified by faith, he will thereby see that God is at peace with him, and himself in a state of free acceptance before him; in which he shall stand and

be kept safe, until he receives the promised glory: the hope of which will be confirmed by his daily experience of God's faithfulness, making all things, even tribulations, work together for his good in the way to glory: thus will the Holy Spirit satisfy him of the love of God to his soul. And the persuasion of his love begets love. It softens the hard heart; it warms the cold heart; it works kindly upon all the affections; and, by setting before them every possible good to be enjoyed in their reconciled God, it mightily disposes them to seek their supreme happiness in walking humbly and closely with him.

Attend then, O my soul, to this Scripture. Meditate upon the experience of which it treats. Pray for it; pray for more of it. And, above all, observe the great truth here taught thee by the Holy Ghost, namely, that thou canst not have any true love of God but what arises from the sense of his being at peace with thee in Jesus. O beware of false teachers; for there is great reason. Many pretend to love an absolute God, without viewing him in the covenant of grace, or as he has revealed himself in the incarnation of his Son. There has been no love of this kind in any heart upon the earth for near six thousand years. Adam in paradise might love him thus: but when driven out of paradise for sin, he could love him so no more. The promised seed of the woman, the Word made flesh, became then the object of his faith, and the only ground of his love. The Scripture has clearly determined this: *We love him because he first loved us—And in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.* When the Holy Ghost has taught this love of God to sinners, and by believing has manifested it to their hearts: then they love him upon Christian principles; and sinners cannot love him upon any other. They love him for that infinite mercy which led him to send his only-begotten Son into the world to finish the salvation of his people; they love him for sending the Holy Ghost to enable them to see the everlasting sufficiency of this salvation, and to believe the record of God concerning it: whereby they come to experience how much the Father loved them. This is heaven begun. The Father's love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost is the foretaste of glory. Whoever enjoys it, has found what is *more*

to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. O, it is indeed heaven upon earth. To preserve it, to improve it, is become the only study of the happy believer. The panting of his soul is after more of this love. The prayer of his faith is, O thou eternal Spirit, help me so to walk with my most loving Father, as that I may maintain peace with him in my conscience, and a growing love to him in my heart, until thou bring me to the enjoyment of everlasting peace and love.

REV. W. ROMAINE.

Contrast between Natural and Revealed Religion in the hour of Death.

THAT which principally displays the prerogatives of the Christian above those of the philosopher, is an all-sufficient provision against the fear of death. A comparison between a dying pagan and a dying Christian will shew this. I consider a pagan, in his dying-bed, speaking to himself what follows: 'On which side soever I consider my state, I perceive nothing but trouble and despair. If I observe the forerunners of death, I see awful symptoms, violent sickness, and intolerable pain, which surround my sick-bed, and are the first scenes of the bloody tragedy. As to the world, my dearest objects disappear; my closest connexions are dissolving; my most specious titles are effacing; my noblest privileges are vanishing away; a dismal curtain falls between my eyes and all the decorations of the universe. In regard to my body, it is a mass without motion and life; my tongue is about to be condemned to eternal silence; my eyes to perpetual darkness; all the organs of my body to entire dissolution; and the miserable remains of my carcass to lodge in the grave, and to become food for the worms. If I consider my soul, I scarcely know whether it be immortal; and could I demonstrate its natural immortality, I should not be able to say, whether my Creator would display his attributes in preserving, or in destroying it; whether my wishes for immortality be the dictates of nature, or the language of sin. If I consider my past life, I have a witness within me, attesting that my practice hath been less than my knowledge, how small soever the latter hath been; and that the abundant depravity of my heart hath thickened the darkness of my mind. If I con-

sider futurity, I think I discover, through many thick clouds, a future state; my reason suggests, that the Author of nature hath not given me a soul so sublime in thought, and so expansive in desire, merely to move in this little orb for a moment: But this is nothing but conjecture; and, if there be another economy after this, should I be less miserable than I am here? One moment I hope for annihilation, the next I shudder with the fear of being annihilated; my thoughts and desires are at war with each other, they rise, they resist, they destroy one another.' Such is the dying heathen. If a few examples of those, who have died otherwise, be adduced, they ought not to be urged in evidence against what we have advanced; for they are rare, and very probably deceptive, their outward tranquillity being only a concealment of trouble within. Trouble is the greater for confinement within, and for an affected appearance without. As we ought not to believe, that philosophy hath rendered men insensible of pain, because some philosophers have maintained, that pain is no evil, and have seemed to triumph over it: so neither ought we to believe, that it hath disarmed death in regard to the disciples of natural religion, because some have affirmed that death is not an object of fear. After all, if some pagans enjoyed a real tranquillity at death, it was a groundless tranquillity, to which reason contributed nothing at all.

O! how differently do Christians die! How doth revealed religion triumph over the religion of nature in this respect! May each of our hearers be a new evidence of this article! The whole, that troubles an expiring heathen, revives a Christian in his dying bed.

Thus speaks the dying Christian: 'When I consider the awful symptoms of death, and the violent agonies of dissolving nature, they appear to me as medical preparations, sharp, but salutary; they are necessary to detach me from life, and to separate the remains of inward depravity from me. Beside, I shall not be abandoned to my own frailty: but my patience and constancy will be proportional to my sufferings, and that powerful arm, which hath supported me through life, will uphold me under the pressure of death. If I consider my sins, many as they are, I am invulnerable; for I go to a tribunal of mercy, where God is reconciled, and justice is satisfied. If I

consider my body, I perceive, I am putting off a mean and corruptible habit, and putting on robes of glory. Fall, fall ye imperfect senses, ye frail organs, fall house of clay into your original dust; you will be *sown in corruption*, but *raised in incorruption*; *sown in dishonour*, but *raised in glory*; *sown in weakness*, but *raised in power*, 1 Cor. xv. 42. If I consider my soul, it is passing, I see, from slavery to freedom. I shall carry with me that which thinks and reflects. I shall carry with me the delicacy of taste, the harmony of sounds, the beauty of colours, the fragrance of odouriferous smells. I shall surmount heaven and earth, nature and all terrestrial things, and my ideas of all their beauties will multiply and expand. If I consider the future economy, to which I go, I have, I own, very inadequate notions of it; but my incapacity is the ground of my expectation. Could I perfectly comprehend it, it would argue its resemblance to some of the present objects of my senses, or its minute proportion to the present operations of my mind. If worldly dignities and grandeurs, if accumulated treasures, if the enjoyments of the most refined voluptuousness, were to represent to me celestial felicity, I should suppose that, partaking of their nature, they partook of their vanity. But, if nothing here can represent the future state, it is because that state surpasseth every other. My ardour is increased by my imperfect knowledge of it. My knowledge and virtue, I am certain, will be perfected; I know, I shall comprehend truth, and obey order; I know I shall be free from all evils, and in possession of all good; I shall be present with God, I know, and with all the happy spirits who surround his throne; and this perfect state, I am sure, will continue for ever and ever.

Such are the all-sufficient supports which revealed religion affords against the fear of death. Such are the meditations of a dying Christian; not of one, whose whole Christianity consists of dry speculations, which have no influence over his practice; but of one who applies his knowledge to relieve the wants of his life. SAURIN.

Where there is terror, there is greater consolation in Religion.

WHENEVER you think of any thing which is in itself terrible, and matter of discouragement, be sure that you mingle the consideration thereof with those sweet

things which God hath given and prescribed to you. There is nothing terrible, as it respects the believer, but God hath joined some comfortable thing with it. The name of God is terrible; he is called the great and dreadful God: but, to sweeten this, he is called the God of all consolations. Death is terrible; he is called the King of Terrors: but to sweeten this, death is called a sleep. The day of judgment is terrible; but, to sweeten that, our present Advocate shall be our future judge; yea, our best friend, and our dear husband. Now, if you abstract the terror of any object from the sweetness of it, no wonder if you be much discouraged. We should behold things as God presents them; and take things as God gives them. *What God hath joined together, no man may put asunder.* If you consider the sweetness of an object, or of a condition, without the sourness of it, then you may grow too wanton. If you consider the terror of an object, or of a condition, without the sweetness of it, then you may be too fearful. But, if you think on both together, then you will fear and believe; and believe and fear; and so be kept from discouragement. REV. W. BRIDGE.

The law of God a test of Inquiry as to the Reality of our Religious Principles.

WHAT has been said on this subject may help all who are inquiring, to determine whether their religion is of the right kind, or not.

Has it had its foundation in the knowledge of God's law? Has this given you the knowledge and conviction of your own sinfulness, and of the dreadful state you are in as a sinner? Persons may have a great deal of solicitude about their souls, and their eternal state, and have a great deal of religion, such as it is, and yet be quite ignorant of the law of God; and so have no true conviction of sin. This seems to have been the case with the young man who came to Christ with this important question, *What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* He appeared to be greatly engaged about his eternal interest; but at the same time manifested himself to be quite ignorant of the law of God, and so of his own true character.

Many have appeared to be in great terrors and distress about their souls and a future state, for a time, who have had no true conviction of sin by the law. They

are not able to give any distinct and intelligible account of the ground of their concern. There have been many of this sort in times of great and general awakening, and solemn attention to the things of religion; they, by hearing terrifying preaching, or seeing others in great distress about their souls, or from some other cause, are themselves terrified with fears they shall go to hell. But if they are examined, they cannot give a rational account about the matter; and all their apprehensions about sin and hell seem to be confused and imaginary. After they have continued in these terrors for a while, they receive light and comfort, as they call it: and this is as confused and imaginary as their preceding terrors were. It is all without any true knowledge of the law, sin, the character of the Mediator, and the way of salvation by him. No wonder if the religion which has such a foundation and beginning, issues in mad enthusiasm, or a careless immoral life, or both.

But let us proceed in the inquiry.

Has the law come, and in the light of this have you seen your own character, and been convinced of sin? Have you been convinced that you were nothing but sin, guilt, and vileness; that you are by nature totally corrupt, and wholly without any good thing. All who have the knowledge of God's law fall under this conviction. And they who never see themselves in this light, may depend upon it, that they have not been truly convinced of sin, and are ignorant of themselves in a degree which is inconsistent with true religion.

Have you been brought to see and feel yourselves wholly to blame for every thing in you that is not perfectly conformed to God's law, or for every thing short of perfect holiness; that you have no excuse for not obeying God's law perfectly? And is it become easy and natural for you to take all the blame to yourselves? Many appear not to be brought to this; and so not to have the true knowledge of their sinfulness. They say, 'We can do nothing of ourselves. We are poor, weak, impotent creatures, and can do nothing any farther than God assists by his Spirit.' And though this is in a sense true; yet they evidently speak of this as some excuse for their not being perfectly holy; or not living in a high degree of the exercise of faith and holiness. Such have not the true knowledge of God's law, and have

not been convinced of sin, as God's people are. Man is under no inability to come up to all that God's law requires, which in any degree abates his obligation to perfect holiness, or affords the least excuse for the want of it. The true Christian takes all the blame to himself for every thing in him that is contrary to God's law, or that is short of perfect holiness. He sees and owns his obligation to be perfectly holy; and condemns and takes shame to himself before God constantly, for every thing wherein he falls short of coming up to this most perfect and excellent rule: for he always considers this law as the only rule of his duty.

Has the law of God slain you, so that you have found it to be unto death? Have you found yourselves justly under the curse of this law, deserving eternal damnation? Has it killed all your hopes of recommending yourselves to God in the least degree by any of your own virtue and doings, and cured you of all such attempts? Thus Paul says it was with him: *I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.* Thus it is with every true Christian.

Do you like the law of God, considered in all its strictness and whole extent; and love it, and delight in it as holy, just, and good? Rom. vii. 12—22. Can you say with the Psalmist, *O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day*, Psal. cxix. 97. This is the character of every good man, *His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night*, Psal. i. 2. Are you disposed and ready to justify God in making such a law, and maintaining it, in the manner he does? Do you revere, love, and honour, the character of the Deity, hereby exhibited to your view? And does the love to this law that Christ hath manifested, and his disposition and zeal to maintain and honour it, though it cost him his life, greatly recommend him to your esteem and love? It was this that recommended him to the Father, as it is written of him: *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of joy above thy fellows*, Heb. i. 9. And it is this that recommends him to every true Christian. In this his excellency chiefly consists: and in this consists his merit and righteousness, in which the believer trusts for pardon and

acceptance with God. How evident and certain is it then, that he who does not understand and love the law of God, does not see Christ's excellency, nor know wherein his worthiness and righteousness consist; and so does not love him, nor trust in him!

Do you long for, seek, and strive after, conformity to this law? Is this the rule you keep in view as the measure of all your exercises and conduct; looking upon yourselves as sinful, so far as you are not conformed to this most perfect rule in heart and life, not desiring the law should be abated in its strictness or brought down to you in the least degree: but desiring yourselves to attain to that perfect holiness which it requires, as an essential part of that salvation you trust in Christ for; and knowing, and feeling, that you cannot be perfectly happy in any other way, or in any attainment short of this? This is most certainly true of every real Christian. Such not only love the law of God, and seek conformity to it as the only rule of their duty, but as their happiness: and the heaven they are seeking for, consists chiefly in this, in their view.

Do you place all your religious attainments, in conformity and obedience to this law? Do the exercises of your religion consist in love to God and your neighbour; and in those things which are implied in this, and result from it? By this you may be helped to determine what is the nature of your religion. There are many, it is to be feared, whose religion will appear to be not of the right kind, if impartially tried by this rule. It consists in self-love, or selfishness; this being the spring of all their exercises and actions, which is as contrary to the love of God and our neighbour, as darkness is to light, or as sin is to holiness. Or it consists wholly in some extraordinary impulses and agitations of mind, or a set of religious exercises and experiences, as they call them; in great discoveries and high flights of affection, joy, &c., which, when examined, appear to have nothing of love to God or to man in them: so have no real conformity to God's law, or any tendency to it. When a person's religious exercises and experiences appear to be of this kind; especially when this is apparent in the fruit; they not leading to, and issuing in, conformity to the law of God in life and conversation, we may depend upon it, his religion is all wrong.

Do you grow in a sense of your own sinfulness? This is always the case with true Christians, who have the knowledge of sin by the law. As they increase in a discerning and sense of the excellence and glory of the divine character and law, they see more and more of their own true character as sinners; and are hence led to see more of the depth, strength, and extent of wickedness in their hearts, as it discovers itself in its various actings. They are constantly making progress in discoveries of this kind, and growing in a sense of the sinfulness of every sin; see more and more of its infinite odiousness and ill desert. There are many professing Christians who talk and act as if they thought they had done with conviction of sin, as soon as they became Christians. All the conviction of sin they have any notion of, is something which preceded their supposed conversion: and since that they have had very little sense of sin, or concern about their own sinfulness. It is not so with the true Christian. When he first commenced a Christian, he began to see his own sinfulness in a true light, and all that went before was a very deficient, partial conviction, and is nothing, compared with this. And conviction of sin has attended, and kept pace with all his religious exercises and attainments. Therefore, while the hypocrite, or the professor who is not truly converted, is bloated, lifted up, and proud, and grows in a high esteem of his own excellence and attainments, being ignorant of his own true character; the real Christian, as he makes advances in the knowledge of God and his law, is constantly growing less, more mean, odious, and ill-deserving, in his own eyes, and sinking down, in a growing sense of his own infinite vileness and ill desert; viewing himself as all over defiled and abominable; condemning, abasing, and abhorring himself, and repenting in dust and ashes.

REV. S. HOPKINS.

Self-examination in the prospect of Death.

Ask thyself a few questions: but see that they be of such importance as to be sufficient to decide the case.

'O my soul, dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus with all thy heart? In persuasion of his ability and willingness to save thee, dost thou stay thyself on him, and rely on his great sacrifice and merit for pardon, righteousness, and life? And,

consenting to him in all his relations and offices, dost thou apply to him for *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*? And, venturing thy all in his hands, dost thou resign thyself unfeignedly to him?' If so, this may comfort thee in a dying hour: *for this is the record, that God hath given us his Son, and life in him; and whosoever hath the Son, hath life.*

'O my soul, art thou a humble, penitent, mourner for sin? Hast thou such a tender heart, as plungeth thee into the depths of true evangelic repentance? Dost thou hate sin as it is sin, and this with a deadly hatred? And art thou busy in the use of all mortifying means to get the power of sin subdued, and the pollution thereof cleansed away?' This may also afford a pleasant expectation after death: *for then those that have sown in tears shall reap a harvest of eternal joy.*

'O my soul, art thou sincere and pure in heart? Dost thou keep thyself from thine iniquity? Dost thou separate thyself from sin, and state thyself against it, as being thy deadly enemy? And art thou in hard exercise, by fasting, by prayer, by watching, by contemning this world, by strong resolves, and earnest dependence on the Mediator's assistance, to get all thy corruptions mortified, and all thy lusts subdued? And art thou successful, having in part gotten the victory? Art thou in daily earnest contention against the *body of sin and death*? And dost thou put on to thy uttermost, through the grace of God, through the blood of Christ, through the efficacy of the promises, through the power of faith, and through the virtue of love, to cleanse thyself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit?' If so, this may yield thee a comfortable hope in death; since he hath the true hope of heaven, who *purifieth himself even as God is pure.*

'O my soul, dost thou love thy Redeemer? I ask thee again, O my soul, dost thou love thy Redeemer? Dost thou love him in sincerity, with a love that surpasseth all other loves? Dost thou scorn this world, and all its pageantry, in comparison of him? Art thou resolved never to be satisfied but in an interest in him, nearness to him, and communion with him? Dost thou give him thy very heart, to dwell in it, to rule in it, and to enrich it with his grace? And with thy heart dost thou make a voluntary surrender of all that thou

art, hast, or canst do to him?' That man is ready for dying that can say with the Psalmist, *Whom have I in the heavens but thee, O Lord, and on the earth there is none I desire besides thee*; for he can also say, *Though heart and flesh fail me, God will be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

'O my soul, dost thou unfeignedly study a *respect to all God's commandments*? Dost thou *seek the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness* in the *first* place? Art thou *loving mercy, doing justly, and walking humbly with thy God*; and *denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts*? Art thou living *soberly, righteously, and godly in a present evil world*? Art thou giving up thyself to all the exercises of a holy life, and seasonably exercising those graces that directly terminate on God, and at the same time following whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are honest, and whatsoever things are virtuous? Is it thy daily business to be uniform as well as constant in all graces, virtues, and duties, that belong to the man and to the Christian? and so tenderly conscientious, as to look not only to the matter and bulk of thy duties, but also to the manner of them; not only to what is done, but also from what principles and for what ends it is done?' If through grace this be thy chief study and habitual business, thou mayest look upon death without terror, *for the righteous have hope in death, and they that do his commandments are blessed, and have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates of the heavenly city.*

'O my soul, for God's sake, for thine own sake, for thy eternal happiness' sake, recollect thyself further, and review thy case as distinctly as thou canst with respect to the particulars mentioned. Art thou intimately and certainly conscious to thyself, there is not one sin thou regardest, or willingly harbourst in thy heart? That there is not one sin, but what thou wouldst give all thou hast in the world to be totally freed from, root and branch; and that thou dost not satisfy thyself only with wishes for a better state, but thou puttest on, in all industrious and watchful endeavours, through grace, to resist and mortify every sin, and practice every duty; that thou makest conscience of watching the heart and secret thoughts, and of

keeping a strict eye over thy most secret intentions, taking care, in every business that requires consideration, to do nothing wherein thou mayest not pray unto God to be thy assistant, and appeal unto him as thy witness and judge; and whatever sins thou art guilty of, which thou sadly re-sentest, and whatever defects there may be in thy duties; or whatever intermissions there may happen in this frame and deportment before the Lord, thou canst in humility appeal unto God, Thou Lord, that knowest all things, knowest that this is the habitual and predominant state of my heart and of my walk? O Searcher of hearts, try me, and search me, that I may see into the very bottom of my soul, and into all its designs: for if there be hypo-

crisy, it is unallowed and detested. Perfection I am infinitely short of, but sincerity, as in thy sight, I plead and claim. Search me, O Lord, that I may have a true sight of myself; and I am willing, I think, to submit to the severest discipline of thy mercy, and to undergo any cure, how rough soever thou seest necessary, for the purging away and correcting all the remaining corruptions and disorders of my soul.' If so, if this be thy real sense, O my soul, if thou mayest not deny it in some measure before the Lord, then thou mayest go out of this world with joyful presages of a happy life in the next. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.*

REV. W. CRAWFORD.

SECTION IV.—THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

The Christian Convert warned of and animated against those Discouragements he must expect to meet with.

WITH the utmost propriety has our Divine Master required us to strive to *enter in at the strait gate*, Luke xiii. 23; thereby, as it seems, intimating, not only that the passage is narrow, but that it is beset with enemies; beset on the right hand and on the left, with enemies cunning and formidable. And be assured, O reader, that whatever your circumstances in life are, you must meet and encounter them. It will therefore be your prudence to survey them attentively in your own reflections, that you may see what you are to expect. . . .

You have often heard them marshalled, as it were, under three great leaders, the flesh, the world, and the devil; and according to this distribution, I would call you to consider the forces of each, as setting themselves in array against you. . . .

Let your conscience answer, whether you do not carry about with you a corrupt and degenerate nature? You will, I doubt not, feel its effects. You will feel, in the language of the Apostle (who speaks of it as the case of Christians themselves), the *flesh lusting against the spirit*, so that you will not be able, in all instances, to do the things that you would, Gal. v. 7. You brought irregular propensities into the world along with you; and you have so often

indulged those sinful inclinations, that you have greatly increased their strength; and you will find in consequence of it, that these habits cannot be broke through without great difficulty. You will, no doubt, often recollect the strong figures in which the Prophet describes a case like yours; and you will own that it is justly represented by that of an *Ethiopian changing his skin, and the leopard his spots*, Jer. xiii. 23. It is indeed possible that you may find such an edge and eagerness upon your spirits, as may lead you to imagine that all opposition will immediately fall before you. But, alas, I fear, that in a little time these enemies which seemed to be slain at your feet, will revive, and recover their weapons, and renew the assault in one form or another. And perhaps your most painful combats may be with such as you had thought most easy to be vanquished, and your greatest danger may arise from some of those enemies from whom you apprehended the least; particularly from pride, and from indolence of spirit; from a secret alienation of heart from God, and from an indisposition for conversing with him, through an immoderate attachment to things seen and temporal, which may be oftentimes exceeding dangerous to your salvation, though perhaps they be not absolutely and universally prohibited. In a thousand of these instances you must learn to deny yourself,

or you cannot be Christ's disciple, Matt. xvi. 24.

You must also lay your account to find great difficulties from the world; from its manners, customs, and examples. The things of the world will hinder you one way, and the men of the world another. Perhaps you may meet with much less assistance in religion than you are now ready to expect from good men. The present generation of them is generally so cautious to avoid every thing that looks like ostentation, and there seems something so unsupportably dreadful in the charge of enthusiasm, that you will find most of your Christian brethren studying to conceal their virtue and their piety, much more than others study to conceal their vice and their profaneness. But while, unless your situation be singularly happy, you meet with very little aid one way, you will, no doubt, find great opposition another. The enemies of religion will be bold and active in their assaults, while many of its friends seem unconcerned: and one sinner will probably exert himself more to corrupt you, than ten Christians to secure and save you. They, who have once been your companions in sin, will try a thousand artful methods to allure you back again to their forsaken society: some of them, perhaps, with an appearance of tender fondness, and many more by the almost irresistible art of banter and ridicule. That boasted test of right and wrong, as it has been wantonly called, will be tried upon you, perhaps without any regard to decency, or even to common humanity. You will be derided and insulted by those, whose esteem and affection you naturally desire; and may find much more propriety than you imagine, in that expression of the Apostle, the trial of cruel mockings, Heb. xi. 36, which some fear more than either sword or flames. This persecution of the tongue you must expect to go through, and perhaps may be branded as a lunatic, for no other cause than that you begin to exercise your reason to purpose, and will not join with those that are destroying their own souls in their wild career of folly and madness.

And it is not at all improbable, that in the meantime Satan may be doing his utmost to discourage and distress you. He will no doubt raise in your imagination the most tempting idea of the gratifications, the indulgences, and the companions, you

are obliged to forsake; and give you the most discouraging and terrifying view of the difficulties, severities, and dangers, which are (as he will persuade you) inseparable from religion. He will not fail to represent God himself, the fountain of goodness and happiness, as a hard master, whom it is impossible to please. He will perhaps fill you with the most distressful fears, and with cruel and insolent malice glory over you as his slave, when he knows you are the Lord's freeman. At one time he will study by his vile suggestions to interrupt you in your duties, as if they gave him an additional power over you: at another time he will endeavour to weary you of your devotion, by influencing you to prolong it to an immoderate and tedious length, lest his power should be exerted upon you when it ceases. In short, this practised deceiver has artifices which it would require whole volumes to display, with particular cautions against each. And he will follow you with malicious arts and pursuits to the very end of your pilgrimage: and will leave no method unattempted, which may be likely to weaken your hands, and to sadden your heart; that if, through the gracious interposition of God, he cannot prevent your final happiness, he may at least impair your peace and your usefulness, as you are passing to it.

This is what the people of God feel; and what you will feel in some degree or other, if you have your lot and your portion among them. But after all, be not discouraged: Christ is the captain of your salvation, Heb. ii. 10. It is delightful to consider him under this view. When we take a survey of these hosts of enemies, we may lift up our head amidst them all, and say, more and greater is he that is with us, than all those that are against us, 2 Kings vi. 16. . . .

Amidst all the opposition of earth and hell, look upward, and look forward; and you will feel your heart animated by the view. Your General is near: he is near to aid you; he is near to reward you.—When you feel the temptations press the hardest, think of him who endured even the cross itself for your rescue. View the fortitude of your divine leader, and endeavour to march on in his steps. Harken to his voice, for he proclaims it aloud, *Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me*, Rev. xxii. 12. *Be thou faithful*

unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10. DR. DODDRIDGE.

The Conflict in Christians between the Flesh and the Spirit.

And these are contrary one to another ; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would, Gal. v. 17.

These two captains or leaders, saith he, the flesh and the Spirit, are one against another in your body, so that ye cannot do what ye would. And this place witnesseth plainly that Paul writeth these things to the faithful, that is, to the church believing in Christ, baptized, justified, renewed, and having full forgiveness of sins. Yet notwithstanding he saith that she hath flesh rebelling against the Spirit. After the same manner he speaketh of himself in the seventh to the Romans: *I (saith he) am carnal, and sold under sin.* And again, *I see another law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, and leading me captive under the law of sin which is in my members.* Also, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? &c.*

Here, not only the schoolmen, but also some of the old fathers, are much troubled, seeking how they may excuse Paul. For it seemeth unto them absurd and unseemly to say, that that elect vessel of Christ should have sin. But we credit Paul's own words, wherein he plainly confesseth that he is sold under sin, that he is led captive of sin, that he hath a law in his members rebelling against him, and that in the flesh he serveth the law of sin. Here again they answer, that the Apostle speaketh in the person of the wicked. But the wicked do not complain of the rebellion of their flesh, of any battle or conflict, or of the captivity and bondage of sin: for sin mightily reigneth in them. This is therefore the very complaint of Paul and of all the faithful. Wherefore they have done very wickedly which have excused Paul and all the faithful to have no sin. For by this persuasion (which proceedeth of ignorance of the doctrine of faith) they have robbed the church of a singular consolation; they have abolished the forgiveness of sins, and made Christ of none effect.

Wherefore, when Paul saith, *I see another law in my members, &c.* he denieth not that he hath flesh, and the vices of the flesh in him. It is likely, therefore, that he

felt sometimes the motions of carnal lust. But yet, no doubt, these motions were well suppressed in him by the great and grievous afflictions and temptations both of mind and body, wherewith he was in a manner continually exercised and vexed, as his epistles do declare: or if he at any time felt the lusts of the flesh, wrath, impatience, and such-like, yet he resisted them by the Spirit, and suffered not those motions to bear rule in him. Therefore let us in no wise suffer such comfortable places (whereby Paul describeth the battle of the flesh against the Spirit in his own body) to be corrupted with such foolish glosses. The schoolmen, the monks, and such other, never felt any spiritual temptations, and therefore they fought only for the repressing and overcoming of fleshly lust, and being proud of that victory which they never yet obtained, they thought themselves far better and more holy than other men. I will not say, that under this holy pretence they nourished and maintained all kinds of horrible sins, as dissension, pride, hatred, disdain, and despising of their neighbours, trust in their own righteousness, presumption, contempt of all godliness and of the word of God, infidelity, blasphemy, and such-like. Against these sins they never fought, nay rather they took them to be no sins at all; they put righteousness in the keeping of their foolish and wicked vows, and unrighteousness in the neglecting and contemning of the same.

But this must be our ground and anchorhold, that Christ is our only and perfect righteousness. If we have nothing whereunto we may trust, yet these three things, (as Paul saith,) faith, hope, and love, do remain. Therefore we must always believe, and always hope; we must always take hold of Christ, as the head and foundation of our righteousness. *He that believeth in him shall not be ashamed,* Rom. ix. 33. Moreover, we must labour to be outwardly righteous also; that is to say, not to consent to the flesh, which always enticeth us to some evil; but to resist it by the Spirit. We must not be overcome with impatience for the unthankfulness and contempt of the people, which abuseth the Christian liberty; but through the Spirit, we must overcome this and all other temptations. Look then, how much we strive against the flesh by the Spirit, so much are we outwardly righteous. Albeit this

righteousness doth not commend us before God. . . .

Let no man marvel therefore or be dismayed, when he feeleth in his body this battle of the flesh against the Spirit; but let him pluck up his heart, and comfort himself with these words of Paul, *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit. Also, These are contrary one to another, so that ye do not those things that ye would.* For by these sentences he comforteth them that be tempted. As if he should say, It is impossible for you to follow the guiding of the Spirit in all things without any feeling or hinderance of the flesh: nay, the flesh will resist, and so resist and hinder you, that ye cannot do those things that gladly ye would. Here it shall be enough if ye resist the flesh, and fulfil not the lust thereof; that is to say, if ye follow the Spirit and not the flesh, which easily is overthrown by impatiency, coveteth to revenge, biteth, grudgeth, hateth God, is angry with him, despaireth, &c. Therefore when a man feeleth this battle of the flesh, let him not be discouraged therewith, but let him resist in spirit, and say, I am a sinner, and I feel sin in me; for I have not yet put off the flesh, in which sin dwelleth so long as it liveth: but I will obey the Spirit, and not the flesh: that is, I will by faith and hope lay hold upon Christ, and by his word I will raise up myself, and being so raised up, I will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

It is very profitable for the godly to know this, and to bear it well in mind; for it wonderfully comforteth them when they are tempted. When I was a monk I thought by and by that I was utterly cast away, if at any time I felt the lust of the flesh; that is to say, if I felt any evil motion, fleshly lust, wrath, hatred, or envy, against any brother. I assayed many ways to help to quiet my conscience, but it would not be; for the concupiscence and lust of my flesh did always return, so that I could not rest, but was continually vexed with these thoughts: This or that sin thou hast committed: thou art infected with envy, with impatiency, and such other sins: therefore thou art entered into this holy order in vain, and all thy good works are unprofitable. If then I had rightly understood these sentences of St. Paul, *The flesh lusteth contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit contrary to the flesh; and these two are one against another, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would do*; I should

not have so miserably tormented myself, but should have thought and said to myself, as now commonly I do, Martin, thou shalt not utterly be without sin, for thou hast flesh; thou shalt therefore feel the battle thereof; according to that saying of St. Paul, *The flesh resisteth the Spirit*. Despair not, therefore, but resist it strongly and fulfil not the lust thereof. Thus doing thou art not under the law.

I remember that Staupitius was wont to say, 'I have vowed unto God above a thousand times that I would become a better man: but I never performed that which I vowed. Hereafter I will make no such vow: for I have now learned by experience, that I am not able to perform it. Unless therefore God be favourable and merciful unto me for Christ's sake, and grant unto me a blessed and a happy hour when I shall depart out of this miserable life, I shall not be able, with all my vows and all my good deeds, to stand before him.' This was not only a true, but also a godly and a holy desperation; and this must they all confess, both with mouth and heart, which will be saved. For the godly trust not to their own righteousness, but say with David, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall none that liveth be justified*, *Psa. cxliii. 2.* Again, *If thou, O Lord, shouldest straitly mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?* *Psa. cxxx. 3.* They look unto Christ their reconciler, who gave his life for their sins. Moreover, they know that the remnant of sin which is in their flesh is not laid to their charge, but freely pardoned. Notwithstanding, in the mean while they fight in spirit against the flesh, lest they should fulfil the lusts thereof. And although they feel the flesh to rage and rebel against the Spirit, and themselves also do fall sometimes into sin through infirmity, yet are they not discouraged, nor think therefore that their state and kind of life, and the works which are done according to their calling, displease God; but they raise up themselves by faith. . . .

But here may some man say, that it is a dangerous matter to teach that a man is not condemned, if by and by he overcome not the motions and passions of the flesh which he feeleth. For when this doctrine is taught amongst the common people, it maketh them careless, negligent, and slothful. This is it which I said a little before, that if we teach faith, then carnal

men neglect and reject works : if works be required, then is faith and consolation of conscience lost. Here no man can be compelled, neither can there be any certain rule prescribed. But let every man diligently try himself to what passion of the flesh he is most subject, and when he findeth that, let him not be careless, nor flatter himself; but let him watch and wrestle in spirit against it, that if he cannot altogether bridle it, yet at the least he do not fulfil the lust thereof.

This battle of the flesh against the Spirit all the children of God have had and felt; and the selfsame do we also feel and prove. He that searcheth his own conscience, if he be not an hypocrite, shall well perceive that to be true in himself which St. Paul here saith : that *the flesh lusteth against the Spirit*. All the faithful, therefore, do feel and confess that their flesh resisteth against the Spirit, and that these two are so contrary the one to the other in themselves, that, do what they can, they are not able to perform that which they would do. Therefore the flesh hindereth us that we cannot keep the commandments of God, that we cannot love our neighbours as ourselves, much less can we love God with all our heart : therefore it is impossible for us to become righteous by the works of the law. Indeed there is a good will in us, and so must there be (for it is the Spirit itself which resisteth the flesh), which would gladly do good, fulfil the law, love God and his neighbour, and such-like, but the flesh obeyeth not this good-will, but resisteth it; and yet God imputeth not unto us this sin; for he is merciful to those that believe for Christ's sake.

But it followeth not therefore that thou shouldest make a light matter of sin, because God doth not impute it. True it is that he doth not impute it : but to whom, and for what cause? To such as repent, and lay hold by faith upon Christ the mercy-seat, for whose sake, as all their sins are forgiven them, even so the remnants of sin which are in them be not imputed unto them. They make not their sin less than it is, but amplify it and set it out as it is indeed : for they know that it cannot be put away by satisfactions, works, or righteousness, but only by the death of Christ. And yet notwithstanding, the greatness and enormity of their sin doth not cause them to despair, but they assure themselves that the same shall not be

imputed unto them or laid unto their charge.

This I say, lest any man should think that after faith is received there is little account to be made of sin. Sin is truly sin, whether a man commit it before he hath received the knowledge of Christ, or after. And God always hateth sin; yea, all sin is damnable, as touching the fact itself. But in that it is not damnable to him that believeth, it cometh of Christ, who by his death hath taken away sin. But to him that believeth not in Christ, not only all his sins are damnable, but even his good works also are sin; according to that saying, *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin*, Rom. xiv. 23. Therefore the error of the schoolmen is most pernicious, which do distinguish sins according to the fact, and not according to the person. He that believeth hath as great sin as the unbeliever. But to him that believeth, it is forgiven and not imputed : to the unbeliever it is not pardoned but imputed. To the believer it is venial; to the unbeliever it is mortal and damnable : not for any difference of sins, or because the sin of the believer is less, and the sin of the unbeliever greater; but for the difference of the persons. For the faithful assureth himself, by faith, that his sin is forgiven him, forasmuch as Christ hath given himself for it. Therefore although he have sin in him, and daily sinneth, yet he continueth godly; but contrariwise, the unbeliever continueth wicked. And this is the true wisdom and consolation of the godly, that although they have and commit sins, yet they know that for Christ's sake they are not imputed unto them.

This I say for the comfort of the godly. For they only feel indeed that they have and do commit sins; that is to say, they feel that they do not love God so fervently as they should do : that they do not believe him so heartily as they would, but rather they oftentimes doubt whether God have a care of them or no; they are impatient, and are angry with God in adversity. Hereof, as I have said, proceed the sorrowful complaints of the faithful in the Scriptures, and especially in the Psalms : and Paul himself complaineth that he is *sold under sin*, Rom. vii. 14. And here he saith, that the flesh resisteth and rebelleth against the Spirit. But because they mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit, (as he saith in another place, and also in

the end of this chapter: *They crucify the flesh, with the desires and lusts thereof*, Gal. v. 24,) therefore these sins do not hurt them nor condemn them. But if they obey the flesh in fulfilling the lust thereof, then do they lose faith and the Holy Ghost. And if they do not abhor their sin and return unto Christ, who hath given power to his church to receive and raise up those that be fallen, that so they may recover faith and the Holy Ghost, they die in their sins. Wherefore we speak not of them which dream that they have faith, and yet continue still in their sins. These men have their judgment already: *They that live after the flesh shall die*. Also, *The works of the flesh are manifest, which are, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, debate, emulations, wrath, contentions, seditions, heresies, envy, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, and such-like, whereof I tell you before, as also I have told you, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*.

LUTHER.

If I could get near the seat of God, I would tell him how many my enemies are, and how strong, how malicious, and how full of rage; and I would beg strength against them, and victory over them. Then would I complain to God of all my indwelling corruption of the body of death that dwells in me, or in which I dwell; and say, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?* I would tell him of the secret workings of pride in my heart; I would acquaint him of the vanity of my own mind, though I am perpetually endeavouring to subdue it. I would tell him with tears, of my sinful passions, of the perpetual stirrings of disorderly affections, whereby I am led away from my God: I would tell him of the hardness of my heart, and the obstinacy of my temper; I would open before his eye all the vices of my constitution, all those secret seeds of iniquity that are ever budding and blossoming to bring forth fruit unto death; I would complain of this sore enemy, the world, that is perpetually besetting me, that strikes upon all my senses, that by the ears, and the eyes, and all the outward faculties, draws my heart away from God, my best friend. I would tell him of the rage of Satan, that watchful and malicious enemy; that I can-

not engage in any duty of worship, but he is ready to throw in some foolish or vain suggestion to divert me; and I would look forward, and point to my last enemy, death, and beg the presence of my God with me when I walk through the dark valley.—Lord, when I enter into that conflict, assist me, that I may fear no evil, but be made more than a conqueror through him that has loved me.

I would mourn, and tell my God how little converse I have with himself; how much he is hidden from me! I would complain to him how far off I am from him the most part of my life! How few are the hours of my communion with him; how short is the visit! How much his face is concealed from me; and how far my heart is divided from him! I would then cry out with bitterness, why is God so far from me, and why is my heart so far from God? How often do I wait upon him in his own sanctuary, and among his saints; but I am not favoured with the sight of his power and glory there! And how often do I seek him in my secret retirement, but I find him not! I would tell him how often I read his promises in the Gospel, and taste no sweetness. I go frequently to those wells of consolation, and they seem to be dry; then I turn my face, and go away ashamed!

I would tell him too of my temporal troubles, because they unfit me for his service; they make me incapable of honouring him in the world, and render me unfit for enjoying him in his ordinances. I would tell him how they damp my zeal, how they bow my spirit down, and make me go mourning all the day long to the dishonour of Christianity, which is a dispensation of grace and joy. Thus I might complain before God of pains and of weakness; of the disorders of the flesh. I might complain there too of the weakness of all my powers, the want of memory, the scatterings and confusion that are upon my thoughts, the wanderings of my fancy, and the unhappy influence that a feeble and diseased body has upon the mind. O my God, how am I divided from thee by dwelling in such a tabernacle! Still patching up a tottering cottage, and wasting my hours in a painful attendance on the infirmities of the flesh! These are my weekly sorrows and groans; these are my daily fears and troubles, and these shall

be spread before my God, in the happy hour when I get near him.

DR. WATTS.

Sometimes thou introducest me into an uncommon affection, into a sweetness past the power of description, which, were it perfected in me, I should not see what life would want to complete its felicity. But I sink back by the weight of misery, and am held entangled.

AUGUSTINE.

If revelation raise us up to the third heaven, the messenger of Satan must presently buffet us, and the thorn of the flesh fetch us down. Thus, now and then a spark falls on my heart, and while I gaze upon it, it dies, or rather my cold heart quenches it.

BAXTER.

In Rom. viii. 7, the Apostle calls the flesh the carnal mind, and he says, *It is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*; since it is enmity itself there is no reconciling it; it will not, nay it cannot, obey God, but is ever lusting and rebelling against his law. The nature of the battle is described at length in Rom. vii. The chapter consists of three parts; first, the believer's liberty from the law to ver. 6. Secondly, he answers some objections made against the law from its nature and properties, and that in his own person, because it had been the means of bringing him to the right knowledge of sin, ver. 7. and sin, being discovered by the law, through the corruption of nature, raged and rebelled the more in him, ver. 8. and the law had made him sensible of God's anger against sin, and of his deserving death and hell for it, ver. 9 to 14: and from thence to the end of the chapter he describes the conflict between the old man and the new; the one consenting to the law, and the other resisting the law. In this conflict there were three sharp attacks; in the first he found in himself two contrary principles of action always resisting each other, the old man fighting against the new, from ver. 14 to 18. Secondly, when the will of the new man was good, through the opposition of the old man, it had not the desired effect, ver. 19, 20; and, thirdly, he felt in himself two contrary laws, both requiring obedience, the law of the members warring and rebelling

against the law of God written in the renewed mind: for no sooner did his mind, guided by the Holy Spirit, set about any thing which God's law commanded, but he found the law of the members making a strong resistance. This he groaned under as a heavy burden, and was humbled for it before God, expecting pardon from him and victory every day, and perfect deliverance at last.

I cannot enlarge upon this chapter. Turn to it, and read it over upon the plan which I have here laid down, remembering all along, that St. Paul is describing himself. He ten times says it is himself he is speaking of from ver. 7 to ver. 14, where he is shewing of what use the law had been to him, when he was first convinced of sin, and from thence to the end he mentions himself thirty-eight times. I the Apostle Paul, I myself, my very self, and not another; I myself am now, at this present, at the very time of writing this; I myself, whom the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made free from the law of sin and death; I myself, to whom now there is no condemnation, for I am in Christ Jesus, and I walk after the Spirit, am still at war with sin that dwelleth in me, with the old man, with the flesh, with the law of the members, with the body of sin. Although I have a new nature, and God is on my side, yet it is a hard and a sharp battle. I find it so. The length of it makes it still more painful, and forces me to cry out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Paul was not out of God's favour, or accursed, but, as the word rendered *wretched* means, he was weary and tired with this continual fighting, troubled with the filthy motions of sin rising and striving and rebelling in him, and giving him no rest; this was such a hard warfare, that he was ever looking out and praying, *Who shall deliver me?* He meant wholly, perfectly, deliver me from this corruption. He sighed for it, not because he doubted of an absolute deliverance, but because he had sure and certain hope of it; not because he was ignorant who his deliverer was, but because he had steadfast faith in him. *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ.* This comforted him, and kept him fighting on with courage. He knew that he should gain the victory, and through Christ; not through his own works, but

through faith in the life and death, in the blood and righteousness, of Christ, he should at last be more than conqueror.

Since this was the case with the Apostle, who can expect a discharge from this warfare until death? What! says one, is it to continue so long? Yes. The Scripture is very clear to this point, as may be easily shewn.

The seat of the corruption of the old man, or of the flesh, is not only in our nature, but is also our very nature itself. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, altogether carnal and corrupt. It is a filthy fountain, always sending forth impure streams; and therefore, while the believer is in the body, he must either be fighting against the flesh, or else be led captive by it. We that are, says Paul, in this tabernacle of flesh, do groan, being burdened with sin and sorrow. And when did they expect an end of their groaning, and rest from their burdens? Not till the tabernacle was dissolved by death. *Ourselves*, says he, *who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* The body will be redeemed from the grave, and raised like the glorious body of Jesus Christ: this is promised, and this we wait for, and, until death deliver us from this mortal corruptible body, we shall be groaning under the burden of it. This was St. Paul's case. He had long sighed to be discharged from his warfare, and, like an old weary tired soldier, he wished the hard tedious campaign was ended, that he might enter into rest: but hear with what joy he at last cries out, *I have fought the good fight.* Have fought it? What! is the battle over? Yes, just over. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have finished my course.* My battle and my life are finished together; and so must thine, reader. Thou art to resist unto blood striving against sin; for thou art called to fight the good fight of faith, until thou lay hold of eternal life. Since thou art a believer, however weak, and hast a new man in thee, as well as an old, they will be fighting against each other, till thou finish thy course: and, if this discourage thee, consider what God has spoken concerning this warfare, and what exceeding great and precious promises he has made to them who are engaged in it.

REV. W. ROMAINE.

We have heard from Scripture some of the victories of faith over sin in its pollution and in its guilt: but there is still a hard warfare to be maintained against its dominion; for it reigneth absolutely in the children of disobedience, and it never ceaseth to strive for mastery in the children of God; who have an evil nature still; an old man, who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and who is to be put off every day, denied in his desires, mortified in his affections, and crucified in his appetites. Thus the commandment runs, *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.* And the new man, who is called to this warfare is ordered to make use of Christ's fulness for promised courage, and strength, and victory: for without Christ he can do nothing. Sin is himself; he is a body of sin; and he has not only to fight against himself, but also against principalities and powers, hosts of foes, united under the banner of the god of this world, trying all their cunning, and all their force to bring the believer back into the bondage of corruption: and what he has of his own is on their side. His worst foe is his indwelling sin, which has a complete body with all its members and lusts, always enticing to something unlawful, and tempting to the commission of it. Every faculty is ready to become an instrument of unrighteousness unto sin. It is an absolute tyrant, who rules his slaves with the most cruel rigour, keeping them captive to his will, although nothing but destruction and misery be in their ways.

Thus original sin is described in the ninth article of our church: It is the fault and corruption of every man born of Adam; and, notwithstanding it still remaineth in the regenerate, yet there is a promise of daily and of complete victory over the tyrant. Thus it is written, *Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Once sin had full dominion, but it is taken away by the Spirit of Christ: not entirely destroyed, as to its being, but as to its ruling power—Dethroned in the judgment, there seen as it is, exceedingly sinful, exceedingly dangerous—Dethroned in the conscience; the believer no longer under the law, but under grace, is freed from condemnation—Dethroned in the will: *Not my will, Lord, but thine be done*—Dethroned in the heart: *I hate all evil thoughts, but thy law do I love: O what*

love have I unto thy law—Dethroned in the life, crucified with its affections and lusts, by the power of the cross of Jesus. It is not quite dead, but it is put to a lingering death, kept upon the cross, dying daily. And thus the sin, which is pardoned through the blood of Christ, is conquered by the arm of Christ, as it is written, *He will subdue our iniquities*, and faith in his promised help keeps them under, subdues them effectually, so that they do not reign in the mortal body to obey them in the lusts thereof.

REV. W. ROMAINE.

How various and changeable are the frames of the Christian's mind! There are times when he feels a desire to take his flight to another world, having such views of its glories and such a foretaste of its pleasures. At other times his soul cleaves to the dust; all is dark around him, and all is dead within him; no light from above, and no enjoyment of religion in the heart. This latter state of mind not unfrequently succeeds the other, and has often, through sin, been occasioned by it. Great elevations we cannot long enjoy in this world without injury to the soul. A continual sunshine would not suit our condition; and even an occasional sunshine, though necessary to prevent despondency, is scarcely ever vouchsafed without its being abused in some way or other by the busy working of sin. Pride or spiritual sloth will insinuate itself, and convert the highest favours of heaven into the greatest evils. This would have been the case with Paul, when favoured with a sight of things ineffable, had not God anticipated the evil effect by a temptation which made and kept him sensible of his own weakness. Pride would otherwise have crept into his soul, and might have been the cause of an awful downfall. As soon as this enemy shews himself, a cloud veils the glory before seen, and the *feast of good things* is withdrawn; and thus what he is attempting to convert into an occasion of sin, is removed. There is nothing that cleaves to man more closely than self and pride. He is ever disposed to attribute to himself what does not belong to him. *Self-dependent* he is tempted to be, even in spiritual things. But when this spirit creeps in, God, by withdrawing his influences, makes him know that he is nothing.

REV. T. CHARLES.

In what the Christian conflict consists.

It is, however, requisite more particularly to enumerate and consider the enemies, whom the Christian soldier is called to encounter, if we would fully understand the important subject. The Apostle having said, *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*; proceeds to shew what are the works of the flesh, and the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 17—23, from which enumeration it is evident that the *flesh* signifies our old nature, as born of Adam's fallen race, with all its propensities, animal and intellectual, as they are contrary to the spiritual commands of God: and that *the spirit*, as striving against it, signifies the new principle infused and supported by the Holy Spirit, renewing our souls to holiness, and so teaching, disposing, and enabling us to love and serve God: *for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

If we then carefully examine the nature of man, we shall find that a disposition to depart from God, and idolatrously to love and seek felicity from the creature, is common to our whole species: and from this general principle, differently modified according to the different constitutions, educations, habits, connexions, or circumstances of men, some are more propense to avarice, some to sensual indulgence, some to ambition, and others to malignant passions, with every possible variation and combination. These propensities, being excited by temptation, gathering force by gratification, triumphing over shame and conscience, and irritated by the interference of those who pursue the same objects, hurry men into every kind of excess; burst forth into all the variety of crimes which have prevailed in every age and nation; and produces all sorts of immorality, and impiety, blasphemy, and other daring offences, against the almighty Governor of the universe. And, as he who attempts to force his way against a torrent best knows its strength; so none are so well acquainted with the power of corrupt propensities and habits, as they who resolutely endeavour to overcome and extirpate them. When, therefore, holy principles have been implanted in the heart by the Spirit of God, and a man sees the

urgent necessity, and feels the ardent desire of *crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts*; then his conflict begins: for pride, anger, envy, malice, avarice, or sensual lusts, being no longer allowed to domineer, abide, like a dethroned tyrant, and have a strong party in the soul; and consequently they oppose and counteract the best desires and purposes of the believer, and engage him in a perpetual contest. At some times they find him off his guard, and gain a temporary advantage, which makes way for deep repentance; at all times they impede his progress, mingle pollution with his services, and thwart and interrupt his endeavours to glorify God and adorn the Gospel. These things are generally most painfully experienced, in respect of such sins as had by any means previously acquired the ascendancy, and in proportion to the degree in which watchfulness and prayer are remitted: but even those evil propensities, from which he before thought himself most free, will be found, on trial, to possess great power in his soul. . . .

But we should further recollect the Apostle's words, *We wrestle not against flesh and blood only, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*, Eph. vi. 10—18. The Scriptures continually lead our thoughts to these invisible enemies, the fallen angels, or evil spirits. A kingdom of darkness and iniquity is spoken of, as established under Satan the arch-apostate, by vast numbers of his associates in rebellion. These differ in capacity and influence, but are all replete with pride, enmity, envy, deceit, and every detestable propensity; and their natural sagacity and powers are increased by long experience in the work of destruction. The entrance of sin by Adam's fall is ascribed to their ambition, envy, malice, and subtlety: and ungodly men are uniformly considered as their *slaves*, yea as their *children*. Satan is called *the god* and *prince of this world*: this old serpent *deceiveth the nations*, yea, *the whole world*; and he *taketh sinners captive at his will*. Conversion is stated to consist in *turning men from Satan to God*. This *adversary, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*; and he *transforms himself into an angel of light* to deceive the unwary. The whole company of evil spirits are repre-

sented as counteracting, by every possible effort, the endeavours of God's servants to promote his cause; as harassing those by temptations whom they cannot destroy; and as desiring *to sift* and assault them. They are spoken of as putting into the hearts of men all kinds of wickedness, and as *filling their hearts*; as being the original authors of all heresies, persecutions, delusions, and apostasies; and, in short, *as working in the children of disobedience*. ...

Again, the believer is also engaged in an arduous conflict with this evil world, which is Satan's grand engine in all his stratagems and assaults. He uses the things of the world as his baits, or proposed premiums, by which to allure men to disobedience: and, *All these*, or some of these, *will I give thee*, is still one grand argument in his temptations. Nor is this the case only when the conduct suggested is evil in itself, and wealth, honour, or pleasure is annexed to it; but more commonly he prevails by seducing us into an inexpedient or excessive use or pursuit of worldly things. Thus ambushments are concealed in every business, connexion, relation, and recreation, or company: and the world prevails against us by inducing us to waste our time, to mispend what is intrusted to us, to omit opportunities of usefulness, and to indulge inordinate or idolatrous affection towards creatures.—The evil things of the world, as we deem them, are likewise employed by Satan to deter us from the profession of our faith, and the performance of our duty. Thus many are seduced into sinful compliances, and led to renounce or dissemble their religion, lest they should be ridiculed, reproached, or forsaken by their friends, or exposed to hardships and persecutions; while they flatter themselves, that this *prudence* will enable them to do the more good, till the event confutes the vain imagination. Near relations, beloved friends, liberal benefactors, admired superiors, as well as powerful opposers, are often in this respect dangerous foes. Riches and poverty, youth and old age, reputation and authority, or the contrary, have each their several snares; while politeness and rude insolence, company and retirement, assault the soul in different ways.—These few hints may shew, in what the believer's conflict consists, and to what continual dangers it must expose him.

REV. T. SCOTT.

2 K

How this conflict is to be maintained.

WHEN, indeed, we seriously consider the variety of those obstacles which interrupt our course; the number, power, and malice of our enemies; the sinfulness and treachery of our own hearts; our weakness, and our exposed condition; we may well say, *Who is sufficient for these things?* or what hope is there of success in this unequal contest? But a proper attention to the Scriptures will convince us, that there is no ground for despondency, or even for discouragement; as the Lord assures us that he will strengthen, assist, and uphold his redeemed people, and never forsake them. We ought not therefore to fear our enemies, because he will be with us; and *if God be for us, who can be against us?* Or who can doubt, that *He who is in us, is greater than he who is in the world?* This was typically intimated in the promises made to Israel respecting their wars with the Canaanites and other nations, which were shadows and figures of *the good fight of faith*. Exod. xiv. 14. Deut. vii. 17—19. xx. 1. Josh. i. 5—7. x. 25. 1 Sam. xiv. 6. 2 Chron. xiv. 11. Is. xli. 10—16. liv. 15—17. We are, therefore, exhorted *to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; for they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; and Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength, is become our salvation.* All power in heaven and earth is vested in *the Lord our Righteousness*. He is *head over all things to his church*: and his servants have always found, that in proportion as they simply trusted in him, *they could do all things*, and that *when they were weak then were they strong; for the power of Christ rested upon them*, 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. Phil. iv. 13. He restrains and moderates, as he sees good, the assaults of our outward enemies, or confounds their devices, and defeats their deep-laid machinations: all providential dispensations are directed by him: nor can any tribulation or temptation pass the bounds he assigns, though all the powers of earth and hell should combine against one feeble saint: while the Holy Spirit communicates strength to our faith, fear, love, hope, patience, and every principle of the new man; imparts strong consolations and heavenly joys; effectually restrains the energy of corrupt passions, and disposes us to self-denial,

to bear the cross, to persevere in well-doing; and to dread sin and separation from Christ, or even dishonouring him, more than any other evil that can befall us. Supported, strengthened, and encouraged in this manner, believers have in every age been enabled *to fight the good fight of faith, and to overcome every foe, by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony; and have not loved their lives unto the death*, Rev. xii. 11. Nay, they have generally acquitted themselves most honourably, when their adversaries were most formidable, and their temptations apparently most invincible; because they were then most simply dependent, and most fervent in praying for the all-sufficient grace of the Lord Jesus, and most steadfast in contemplating his sufferings and the glory that followed.

In order to maintain this conflict with good hope of success, we must *take to ourselves*, and *put on the whole armour of God*, Eph. vi. 10—13. 1 Thess. v. 8. Conscious *sincerity* in our profession of the Gospel must be as the *girdle* of our loins, without which we shall be entangled and embarrassed in all our conduct: an habitual obedient regard to our Lord's commands, as the rule of *righteousness*, must be our *breastplate* in facing our foes: while a distinct knowledge and cordial reception of the *gospel of peace*, and the way of access, pardon, reconciliation, and acceptance in the divine Saviour, must be *the shoes of our feet*, our only effectual preparation for firmly standing our ground, or comfortably marching to meet our assailants. Above all, *faith*, or a firm belief of the truths and reliance on the promises of God, must be our *shield*, with which we may ward off and extinguish the *fiery darts of Satan*, and prevent their fatal effects. *Hope* of present support and heavenly felicity must be as a *helmet* to cover our head in the day of battle; and with the plain testimonies, precepts, promises, and instructions of the word of God, as with *the sword of the Spirit*, we must, after our Lord's example, repel the tempter, and so resist him that he may flee from us. In short, *the weapons of our warfare are not carnal*; for worldly wisdom, philosophical reasonings, and our own native strength and resolution, like Saul's armour when put upon David, can only encumber us. But when, conscious of our weakness and unworthiness, and

distrusting our own hearts, we *strive against sin, looking unto Jesus*, relying on his power, truth, and grace, and observing his directions; when we aim to do his will, to seek his glory, and copy his example; then indeed we are armed for the battle: and, however men may despise our weapons, (as Goliath did David the shepherd, with his staff, his sling, and stones,) we shall not be put to shame in the event, but shall be made more than conquerors over every inward and outward foe. This armour is prepared in Christ, *our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, and in *his fulness of grace*; we take it to ourselves by *the prayer of faith*, by searching and meditating on the Scriptures, and attendance on the means of grace. By watchfulness, sobriety, habitual circumspection, and caution, we put it on and keep it bright: and thus we are continually prepared for the conflict, and not liable to be surprised unawares, or to fall into the ambushments of our vigilant enemies. Matt. xxvi. 41. Luke xxi. 34—36. Rom. xiii. 11—14. 1 Pet. v. 8, 9.: and, when we live at peace with our brethren, and pray for, warn, counsel, and encourage them also; we *fight the good fight*, as a part of the great army, which is enlisted under the Redeemer's standard, to wage war against sin, the world, and the powers of darkness.

REV. T. SCOTT.

Greatness of the Christian's spiritual trials and warfare.

WHO can reflect upon his present state and not presently be in pangs? The troubles that follow humanity are many and great, those that follow Christianity more numerous and grievous. The sickness, pains, losses, disappointments, and whatsoever afflictions that are in the Apostle's language, human, or common to men, 1 Cor. x. 13. (as are all the external sufferings of Christians, in nature and kind, though they are liable to them upon an account peculiar to themselves, which there the Apostle intimates,) are none of our greatest evils. . . . These things are little considerable in comparison of the more spiritual grievances of Christians, as such; that is, those that afflict our souls while we are (under the conduct of Christ) designing for a blessed eternity; if we indeed make that our business, and do seriously intend our spirits in order hereto.

The darkness of our beclouded minds; the glimmering, ineffectual apprehension we have of the most important things; the inconsistency of our shattered thoughts, when we would apply them to spiritual objects; the great difficulty of working off an ill frame of heart, and the no less difficulty of retaining a good: our being so frequently tossed as between heaven and hell; when we sometimes think ourselves to have even attained and hope to descend no more, and are all on a sudden plunged in the ditch, so as that our own clothes might abhor us; fall so low into an earthly temper, that we can like nothing heavenly or divine, and because we cannot, are enforced justly most of all to dislike ourselves! Are these things little with us? How can we forbear to cry out of the depths, to the Father of our spirits, that he would pity and relieve his own offspring? Yea, are we not weary of our crying; and yet more weary of holding in? How do repelled temptations return again, and vanquished corruptions recover strength! We know not when our work is done. We are miserable that we need to be always watching, and more miserable that we cannot watch, but are so often surprised and overcome of evil. We say sometimes with ourselves, we will seek relief in retirement, but we cannot retire from ourselves; or in converse with godly friends, but they sometimes prove snares to us, and we to them, or we hear but our own miseries repeated in their complaints. Would we pray? How faint is the breath we utter! How long is it before we can get our souls possessed with any becoming apprehensions of God, or lively sense of our own concernments! Would we meditate? We sometimes go about to compose our thoughts, but we may as well essay to hold the winds in our fist. If we venture forth into the world, how do our senses betray us! how are we mocked with their impostures! Their nearer objects become with us the only realities, and eternal things are all vanished into airy shadows. Reason and faith are laid asleep, and our sense dictates to us what we are to believe and do, as if it were our only guide and lord.

REV. JOHN HOWE.

Christianity is well termed a warfare; for a warfare it is, wherein no danger can be prevented, no enemy conquered, no

victory obtained, without much courage and resolution. I have not only many outward enemies to grapple with, but I have myself, my worst enemy, to encounter and subdue. As for those enemies which are but near me, by the assistance of God's Spirit I can make pretty good shift to keep them at the sword's point: but this enemy that is gotten within me, has so often foiled and disarmed me, that I have reason to say, as David did of his enemies, *It is too strong for me*; and as he said of the chief of his, *I shall one day fall by the hands of Saul*, so have I too much occasion to say, I shall fall by myself, as being myself the greatest enemy to my own spiritual interest and concerns. How necessary is it then that I should raise and muster up all my force and courage, put on my spiritual armour, and make myself *strong in the Lord and in the power of his might*! I know I must strive, before I can *enter in at the strait gate*; I must win the crown, before I can wear it; and be a member of the church militant, before I be admitted into the church triumphant. In a word, I must go through a solitary wilderness and conquer many enemies, before I come to the land of Canaan; or else I must never be possessed of it. What then? Shall I lose my glory, to balk my duty? Shall I let go my glorious and eternal possession, to save myself from a seeming hardship, which the devil would persuade me to be a trouble and an affliction? Alas! if Christ had laid aside the great work of my redemption, to avoid the undergoing of God's anger and man's malice, what a miserable condition had I been in! And, therefore, whatever taunts and reproaches I meet with from the presumptuous and profane, the infidel and atheistical reprobates of the age; let them laugh at my profession, or mock at what they are pleased to call my preciseness; let them defraud me of my just rights, or traduce and bereave me of my good name and reputation; let them vent the utmost of their poisonous malice and envy against me; I have this comfortable reflection still to support me, that if I suffer all this for Christ's sake, it is in the cause of one who suffered a thousand times more for mine, and, therefore, it ought to be matter of joy and triumph, rather than of grief and dejection to me; especially considering that *these my light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work out*

for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Upon the prospect of which, I firmly resolve, notwithstanding the growing strength of sin and the overbearing prevalency of my own corrupt affections, to undertake all duties and undergo all miseries, that God, in his infinite wisdom, thinks fit to lay upon me or exercise my patience in. BP. BEVERIDGE.

The Christian's life is a continual wrestling, from his spiritual birth till his natural death; from the hour when he first sets his face to Heaven, till he shall set his foot in Heaven. No condition wherein the Christian here below is quiet. Is it prosperity, or adversity? Here is work for both hands, to keep pride and security down in the one, faith and patience up in the other; no place which the Christian can call privileged ground. . . . No duty can be performed without wrestling: the Christian needs his sword as much as his trowel. He wrestles with a body of flesh; he cannot go his journey without it, and much ado to go with it. If the flesh be kept high, then it is wanton, and will not obey; if low, then it is weak, and soon tires. He wrestles with a body of sin: this mutters and murmurs when the soul is taking up any duty; sometimes keeps him from duty. It is true indeed, grace sways the sceptre in such a soul; yet the unregenerate part takes advantage when grace is not on its watch to disturb its government, and shut it out from duty; and when it cannot shut from duty, yet then is the Christian wofully yoked with it in duty. Thus we see the Christian is assailed on every side by his enemy; and how can it be other, when the seeds of war are laid deep in the natures of both, which can never be rooted up till the devil cease to be a devil, sin to be sin, and the saint to be a saint? Sin will lust against grace, and grace draw upon sin whenever they meet.

GURNALL.

The Christian's warfare from Satan's temptations.

IN his spiritual estate, if he be a weak Christian, Satan assaulteth him with perpetual doubts and fears touching his election, conversion, adoption, perseverance, Christian liberty, strength against corruptions, companies, temptations, persecutions, &c.: if he be a strong Christian, he laboureth to draw him unto self-confidence, spiritual

pride, contempt of the weak, neglect of further proficiency, and the like. There is no natural part or faculty, which is not aimed at likewise by the malice of Satan; for Christ when he comes, takes possession of the whole man, and therefore Satan sets himself against the whole man. Corporeal and sensitive faculties are tempted either to sinful representations, letting in and transmitting the provisions of lust unto the heart, by gazing and glutting themselves on the objects of the world: or to sinful executions, finishing and letting out those lusts which have been conceived in the heart. The phantasy is tempted by satanical injections and immutations to be the forge of loose, vain, unprofitable, and unclean thoughts. The understanding, to earthly wisdom, vanity, infidelity, prejudices, mispersuasions, fleshly reasonings, vain speculations and curiosities, &c. The will, to stiffness, resistance, dislike of holy things, and pursuit of the world. The conscience, to deadness, immobility, and a stupid benumbedness, to slavish terrors and evidences of hell, to superstitious bondage, to carnal security, to desperate conclusions. The affections, to independence, distraction, excess, precipitancy, &c. In temporal conditions, there is no estate of health, wealth, peace, honour, estimation, or the contraries unto these; no relation of husband, father, magistrate, subject, &c. unto which Satan hath not such suitable suggestions, as by the advantage of fleshly corruptions may take from them occasion to draw a man from God. Lastly, in regard of our actions and employments, whether they be divine, such as respect God, as acts of piety, in reading, hearing, meditating, and studying his Word, in calling upon his name, and the like, or such as respect ourselves, as acts of temperance and sobriety, personal examinations, and more particular acquaintance with our own hearts; or such as respect others, as acts of righteousness, charity, and edification. Or whether they be actions natural, such as are requisite to the preservation of our being, as sleep and diet; or actions civil, in our callings or recreations, in all these Satan laboureth either to pervert us in the performance of them, or to divert us from it. There is then no condition, faculty, relation, or action of a Christian man, the which is not always under the eye and envy of a most raging, wise, and industrious enemy. And, therefore, great rea-

son there is, that Christians should be military men, well instructed in the whole armour of God, that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, and to quench all his fiery darts. It is our calling to wrestle against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places, to resist the devil, to strive against sin, to mortify earthly members, to destroy the body of sin, to deny ourselves, to contradict the reasonings of the flesh, to check and controul the stirrings of concupiscence, to resist and subdue the desires of our evil hearts, to withstand and answer the assaults of Satan, to outface the scorns, and despise the flatteries, of the present world, in all things to endure hardness as the soldiers of Jesus Christ. Our cause is righteous, our Captain is wise and puissant, our service honourable, our victory certain, our reward massy and eternal, so that in all respects great encouragements we have to be voluntaries in such war, the issue whereof is our enemy's perdition, our Master's honour, and our own salvation.

BP. REYNOLDS.

*Saints of greatest growth in Grace
may fall.*

THE fearful eruptions of actual sins that have been in the lives of believers, are the most of them in the lives of men that were not of the lowest form or ordinary sort, but of men that had a peculiar eminency in them on the account of their walking with God in their generation. Such were Noah, Lot, David, Hezekiah, and others. They were not men of an ordinary size, but higher than their brethren by the shoulders and upwards in profession, yea, in real holiness. And surely that must needs be of a mighty efficacy that could hurry such giants in the way of God into such abominable sins as they fell into. An ordinary engine could never have turned them out of the course of their obedience. It was a poison that no athletic constitution of spiritual health, no antidote could withstand.

And these very men fell not into their great sins at the beginning of their profession, when they had had but little experience of the goodness of God, of the sweetness and pleasantness of obedience, of the power and craft of sin, of its impulsions, solicitations, and surprisals, but after a long course of walking with God, and

acquaintance with all these things, together with innumerable motives unto watchfulness. Noah, according to the lives of men in those days of the world, had walked uprightly with God some hundreds of years before he was so surprised as he was, Gen. ix. Righteous Lot seems to have been towards the end of his days, ere he defiled himself with the abominations recorded. David, in a short life, had as much experience of grace and sin, and as much close, spiritual communion with God, as ever had any of the sons of men, before he was cast to the ground by this law of sin. So was it with Hezekiah in his degree, which was none of the meanest. Now to set upon such persons, so well acquainted with its power and deceit, so armed and provided against it, that had been conquerors over it for so many years, and to prevail against them, it argues a power and efficacy too mighty for every thing but the Spirit of the Almighty to withstand. Who can look to have a greater stock of inherent grace than those men had; to have more experience of God, and the excellency of his ways, the sweetness of his love, and of communion with him, than they had? who hath either better furniture to oppose sin withal, or more obligation so to do, than they? and yet we see how fearfully they were prevailed against.

As if God had permitted their falls on set purpose, that we might learn to be wary of this powerful enemy, they all of them fell out when they had newly received great and stupendous mercies from the hand of God, that ought to have been strong obligations unto diligence and watchfulness in close obedience. Noah was but newly come forth of that world of waters wherein he saw the ungodly world perishing for their sins, and himself preserved by that astonishing miracle which all ages must admire. Whilst the world's desolation was an hourly remembrancer unto him of his strange preservation by the immediate care and hand of God, he falls unto drunkenness. Lot had newly seen that which every one that thinks on cannot but tremble. He saw, as one speaks, hell coming out of heaven upon unclean sinners, the greatest evidence, except the cross of Christ, that God ever gave in his providence of the judgment to come. He saw himself and children delivered by the special care and miraculous

hand of God; and yet, whilst these strange mercies were fresh upon him, he fell into drunkenness and incest. David was delivered out of all his troubles, and had the necks of his enemies given him round about, and he makes use of his peace from a world of trials and troubles to contrive murder and adultery. Immediately, it was, after Hezekiah's great and miraculous deliverance, that he falls into his carnal pride and boasting. I say, their falls in such seasons seem to be permitted on set purpose, to instruct us all in the truth that we have in hand; so that no persons, in no seasons, with what furniture of grace soever, can promise themselves security from its prevalency, any otherwise than by keeping close constantly to him, who hath supplies to give out that are above its reach and efficacy. Methinks this should make us look about us. Are we better than Noah, who had that testimony from God, that he was a perfect man in his generation, and walked with God? Are we better than Lot, whose righteous soul was vexed with the evil deeds of ungodly men, and is therefore commended by the Holy Ghost? Are we more holy, wise, and watchful than David, who obtained this testimony, that he was *a man after God's own heart*? or better than Hezekiah, who appealed to God himself, that he had served him uprightly, with a perfect heart? And yet what prevalency this law of sin wrought in and over them, we see. And there is no end of the like examples; they are all set up as buoys to discover unto us the sands, the shelves, the rocks, whereupon they made their shipwreck, to their hazard, danger, loss, yea, and would have done to their ruin, had not God been pleased in his faithfulness graciously to prevent it. And this is the first part of this evidence of the power of sin, from its effects. . . .

We have a notable instance of the like in most of the churches that our Saviour awakens to the consideration of their condition, in the Revelation. We may single out one of them: many good things were there in the church of Ephesus, chap. ii. 2, 3. for which it is greatly commended, but yet it is charged with a decay, a declension, a gradual falling off and apostasy: *Thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and do thy first works*, ver. 4, 5. There was a decay both inward, in the frame of heart, as to

faith and love; and outward, as to obedience and works, in comparison of what they had formerly, by the testimony of Christ himself. The same also might be shewed concerning the rest of those churches, only one or two of them excepted. Five of them are charged with decays and declensions. Hence there is mentioned in the Scripture of the *kindness of youth*, of the *love of espousals*, with great commendation, Jer. ii. 2, 3. of our *first faith*, 1 Tim. v. 12. of the *beginning of our confidence*, Heb. iii. 14. And cautions are given, that we *lose not the things that we have wrought*, 2 John 8. But what need we look back or search for instances to confirm the truth of this observation? An habitual declension from first engagements unto God, from first attainments of communion with God, from first strictness in duties of obedience, is ordinary and common amongst professors.

DR. J. OWEN.

God's children seldom fall into any heinous sin, without having before experienced some singular visitations and awakenings of grace. He that stands in grace, and takes heed to his heart, must have observed, that the tempter never watches the mind more closely, than after it has experienced some particular favour from God, and an uncommon fervency in prayer, or in meditation on the word. The fall of the disciples was now drawing very nigh; but it was preceded by repeated visits from the Lord Jesus. Before Peter denied his Master three times, he had been visited, awakened, and warned. Man must therefore be convinced that his fall is not to be imputed to God. He previously gives sufficient grace, he uses proper precautions for preserving a soul. Now, if a fall happens notwithstanding his care, we ourselves must bear witness that he was true, and that it is to ourselves, and not to Him, that we are to impute our ruin. Happy is he who makes a right use of the visitations of grace, which usually precede temptations.

RAMBACH.

The Spirit of Adoption affords consolation in this conflict.

GAL. iv. 6, *Crying, Abba, Father.*—Paul might have said, 'God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, *calling, Abba, Father.*' He saith not so, but

'*crying, Abba, Father,*' that he might shew and set forth the temptation of a Christian, which yet is but weak and weakly believeth. In the eighth to the Romans, he calleth this crying an unspeakable groaning. Likewise he saith, *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for us, with unspeakable groanings, &c.*

And this is a singular consolation when he saith, *that the Spirit of Christ is sent into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father:* and again, *that he helpeth our infirmities, making intercession for us with unspeakable groanings.* He that could assuredly believe this, should never be overcome with any affliction, were it never so great. But there are many things that hinder this faith in us. First our heart is born in sin: moreover, this evil is naturally grafted in us, that we doubt of the good will of God towards us, and cannot assure ourselves that we please God, &c. Besides all this, the devil our adversary rangeth about with terrible roarings, and saith, 'Thou art a sinner, therefore God is angry with thee, and will destroy thee for ever. Against these horrible and intolerable roarings, we have nothing whereupon to hold and stay ourselves, but only the word which setteth Christ before us as a conqueror over sin and death, and over all evils. But to cleave fast to the word in this temptation and these terrors of conscience, herein standeth all the difficulty. For then Christ appeareth to no sense. We see him not; the heart feeleth not his presence or succour in temptation; but rather it seemeth that he is angry with us, and that he forsakes us. Moreover, when a man is tempted and afflicted, he feeleth the fiery darts of the devil, the terrors of death, the anger and judgment of God. All these things cry out horribly against us, so that we see nothing else but desperation and eternal death. But yet in the midst of these terrors of the law, thunderings of sin, assaults of death, and roarings of the devil, the Holy Ghost, saith Paul, crieth in our hearts, *Abba, Father!* And this cry surmounteth the horrible cries of the law, sin, death, the devil, &c.; it pierceth the clouds and the heavens, and ascendeth up into the ears of God.

Paul signifieth therefore by these words, that there is yet infirmity in the godly: as he doth also in the sixth chapter to the

Romans, when he saith, *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities*. Forasmuch therefore as the sense and feeling of the contrary is strong in us; that is to say, forasmuch as we feel more the displeasure of God, than his good will and favour towards us; therefore the Holy Ghost is sent into our hearts, which doth not only sigh and request for us, but mightily crieth, *Abba, Father!* and prayeth for us according to the will of God with tears and unspeakable groanings. And how is this done? When we are in terrors and in the conflict of conscience, we take hold of Christ, and believe that he is our Saviour; but then do the law and sin terrify and torment us most of all. Moreover, the devil assaileth us with all his energies and fiery darts, and goeth about with all his power to take away Christ and all consolations from us. Here we feel ourselves almost gone, and at the point of desperation: for then are we that bruised reed and smoking flax which Isaiah speaketh of, chap. xlii. 3. Notwithstanding, in the mean season, *the Holy Ghost helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with unspeakable groanings*, Rom. viii. 26, and certifieth our spirits that *we are the children of God*. Thus is the mind raised out of terrors; it looketh unto his Saviour and high bishop Jesus Christ; it overcometh the infirmity of the flesh; it conceiveth comfort again, and saith, *Abba, Father*. This groaning, which then we scantily feel, Paul calleth a crying and unspeakable groaning, which filleth both heaven and earth. Moreover, he calleth it the crying and groaning of the Spirit, because the Holy Ghost stirreth up the same in our hearts when we are weak, and oppressed with temptation and terror.

Although then the law, sin, and the devil, cry out against us never so much with great and terrible roarings, which seem to fill heaven and earth, and far to exceed this groaning of our heart, yet can they not hurt us. For the more fiercely they assail us, accuse and torment us with their cryings, so much the more do we groan; and in groaning lay hold upon Christ, call upon him with heart and mouth, cleave unto him, and believe that he was made under the law, that he might deliver us from the curse of the law, and destroy both sin and death. And thus, when we have taken hold of Christ by faith, we cry through him, *Abba, Father*,

Gal. iv. 6. And thus our cry doth surmount the roaring of the law, sin, the devil, &c.

But so far off is it that we think this groaning, which we make in these terrors, and this our weakness, to be a cry, that scarcely we perceive it to be a groaning. For our faith, which in temptation thus groaneth unto Christ, is very weak, if we consider our own sense and feeling, and therefore we hear not this cry. We have but only the word, which when we apprehend in this conflict, we have a little breathing, and then we groan. Of this groaning some little feeling we have, but the cry we hear not. *But he*, saith Paul, *which searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the meaning of the spirit, &c.*, Rom. viii. 27. To this Searcher of the hearts, this small and feeble groaning (as it seemeth unto us) is a loud and a mighty cry, and an unspeakable groaning; in comparison whereof the great and horrible roarings of the law, of sin, of death, and of the devil, and of hell, are nothing; neither can they be once heard. Paul, therefore, not without cause, calleth this groaning of a godly afflicted heart, a cry and a groaning of the spirit which cannot be expressed. For it filleth heaven; so that the angels think they hear nothing else but this cry.

But in us there is a clean contrary feeling. For it seemeth unto us that this our small groaning doth not so pierce the clouds, that there is nothing else heard in heaven of God or his angels. Nay, we think, and especially during the time of temptation, that the devil horribly roareth against us, that the heavens thunder and the earth trembleth, that all will fall upon us, that all creatures threaten our destruction, that hell is open and ready to swallow us up. This feeling is in our heart; these horrible voices, and this fearful show, we hear and we see. And this it is that Paul saith in 2 Cor. xii. 9. that *the strength of Christ is made perfect through weakness*. For then is Christ almighty indeed; then doth he truly reign and triumph in us, when we are so weak that we can scarcely groan. But Paul saith, that this groaning is, in the ears of God, a most mighty cry, which filleth both heaven and earth. . . .

Thou must mark also that Paul saith, that the Spirit maketh intercession for us in our temptation; not with many words or long prayer, but only with a groaning, which notwithstanding cannot be expressed:

and that he crieth not aloud with tears, saying, *Have mercy on me, O God, &c.*, Psa. li. 1, but only uttereth a little sound and a feeble groaning, as, *Ah, Father*. This is but a little word, and yet notwithstanding it comprehendeth all things. The mouth speaketh not, but the affection of the heart speaketh after this manner: Although I be oppressed with anguish and terror on every side, and seem to be forsaken and utterly cast away from thy presence, yet am I thy child, and thou art my

Father for Christ's sake. I am beloved, because of the Beloved. Wherefore, this little word Father, conceived effectually in the heart, passeth all the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and of the most eloquent rhetoricians that ever were in the world. This matter is not expressed with words, but with groanings, which groanings cannot be uttered with any words or eloquence, for no tongue can express them.

LUTHER.

SECTION V.—ON AFFLICTION.

Some Considerations against Repining and Desponding under the hand of God.

AFFLICTIONS fall not out by casualty, but by counsel, Job v. 6. Eph. i. 11; by this counsel of God they are ordained as means of much spiritual good to saints, Isa. xxvii. 9. *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, &c.*, Heb. xii. 10. *But he for our profit, &c.*, Rom. viii. 28. *All things work together for good*. They are God's workmen upon our hearts, to pull down the pride and carnal security of them; and being so, their nature is changed; they are turned into blessings and benefits, Psa. cxix. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted*. And sure, then, thou hast no reason to quarrel with, but rather to admire that God should concern himself so much in thy good, to use any means for the accomplishing of it. Phil. iii. 11. Paul could bless God, *if by any means he might attain the resurrection of the dead*. *My brethren*, (saith James,) *count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations*, James i. 2, 3. My father is about a design of love upon my soul, and do I well to be angry with him? All that he doth is in pursuance of, and in reference to, some eternal, glorious ends upon my soul. O it is my ignorance of God's design, that makes me quarrel with him! he saith to thee in this case, as to Peter, *What I do thou knowest not now, but hereafter thou shalt know it*. . . .

It is of marvellous efficacy to keep the heart from sinking under afflictions, *to call to mind, that thine own Father hath the ordering of them*: not a creature moves

hand or tongue against thee, but by his permission. Suppose the cup be a bitter cup, yet it is the cup which thy Father hath given thee to drink; and canst thou suspect poison to be in that cup which he delivers thee? Foolish man, put home the case to thine own heart, consult with thine own bowels; canst thou find in thy heart to give thy child that which would hurt, or undo him? No, thou wouldst as soon hurt thyself as him; *If thou then being evil knowest how to give good gifts to thy children*, how much more doth God? Matt. vii. 11. . . .

God respects you as much in a low, as in a high condition; and therefore it need not so much trouble you to be made low; nay, to speak home, he manifests more of his love, grace, and tenderness, in the time of affliction, than prosperity. As God did not at first choose you because you were high, so he will not forsake you because you are low: Men may look shy upon you, and alter their respects, as your condition is altered. When Providence hath blasted your estates, your summer friends may grow strange, as fearing you may be troublesome to them; but will God do so? No, no! *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5. Indeed if adversity and poverty could bar you from access to God, it were a sad condition; but you may go to God as freely as ever. *My God*, saith the church, *will hear me*, Mic. vii. 7. Poor David, when stripped of all earthly comforts, could yet encourage himself in the Lord his God; and why cannot you? Suppose your husband or child had lost all at sea, and should come to you in rags;

could you deny the relation, or refuse to entertain him? If you would not, much less would God: why then are you so troubled? Though your condition be changed, your Father's love and respects are not changed. . . .

Again, It would much stay the heart under adversity, to consider, That God, by such humbling providences, may be accomplishing that for which you have long prayed and waited. And should you be troubled at that? Say, Christian, hast thou not many prayers depending before God upon such accounts as these; that he would keep thee from sin, discover to thee the emptiness and insufficiency of the creature; that he would kill and mortify thy lusts, that thy heart may never find rest in any enjoyment but Christ? Why now, by such humbling and impoverishing strokes, God may be fulfilling thy desire. Wouldst thou be kept from sin? Lo, *he hath hedged up thy way with thorns*. Wouldst thou see the creature's vanity? Thy affliction is a fair glass to discover it; for the vanity of the creature is never so effectually and sensibly discovered, as in our own experience of it. Wouldst thou have thy corruptions mortified? This is the way; now God takes away the food and fuel that maintained them; for as prosperity begat and fed them, so adversity, when sanctified, is a mean to kill them. Wouldst thou have thy heart to rest no where but in the bosom of God? What better way canst thou imagine Providence should take to accomplish thy desire, than by pulling from under thy head, that soft pillow of creature delights on which thou restedst before? And yet you fret at this, peevish child! How dost thou exercise thy Father's patience? If he delay to answer thy prayers, thou art ready to say he regards thee not; if he do that which really answers the scope and main end of them, but not in the way thou expectedst, thou quarrellest with him for that; as if instead of answering, he were crossing all thy hopes and aims; is this ingenuous? Is it not enough that God is so gracious to do what thou desirest, but thou must be so impudent to expect he should do it in the way which thou prescribest?

Again, It may stay thy heart, if thou consider, That in these troubles, God is about that work, which if thou didst see the design of, thy soul would rejoice. We, poor creatures, are bemisted with much ignorance, and are not able to discern

how particular providences work towards God's end; and therefore, like Israel in the wilderness, are often murmuring, because Providence leads us about in a howling desert, where we are exposed to straits; though yet, then he led them, and is now leading us, *by the right way, to a city of habitations*. If you could but see how God, in his secret counsel, hath exactly laid the whole plot and design of thy salvation, even to the smallest means and circumstances; this way, and by these means such a one shall be saved, and by no other; such a number of afflictions I appoint for this man, at this time, and in this order: they shall befall him thus, and thus they shall work for him. Could you, I say, but discern the admirable harmony of divine dispensations, their mutual relations to each other, together with the general respect and influence they all have unto the last end; of all the conditions in the world, you would choose that you are now in, had you liberty to make your own choice. . . . *God works all things according to the counsel of his own will*, so that the counsel of God hath ordained this as the best way to bring about thy salvation: Such a one hath a proud heart, so many humbling providences I appoint for him: such a one an earthly heart, so many impoverishing providences for him. Did you but see this! I need say no more to support the most dejected heart. . . .

O let us take heed that we overlook not the many precious mercies which the people of God enjoy amidst all their troubles.

It is a pity that our tears, upon the account of our troubles, should so blear and blind our eyes, that we should not see our mercies and grounds of comfort. I will not insist upon the mercy of having your lives given you for a prey, nor yet upon the many outward comforts, temporal conveniences, and accommodations which you enjoy, even above what Christ and his precious servants, of whom the world was not worthy, ever had.

But what say you to pardon of sin, interest in Christ, the covenant of promise, and an eternity of happiness, in the presence of God after a few days are over? O that ever a people entitled to such mercies as these, should droop under any temporal affliction, or be so much concerned for the frowns of men, and loss of trifles! You have not the smiles of great men, but you have the favour of the great God; you are, it may be, cast back in your estates,

but thereby furthered in spirituals. You cannot live so bravely, plentifully, and easily, as before; but still you may live as holy and heavenly as ever: will you then grieve so much for these circumstantial, as to forget your substantial? Shall light troubles make you forget weighty mercies? Remember the church's true riches are laid out of the reach of all its enemies: they may make you poor, but not miserable. What though God do not distinguish, in his outward dispensations, betwixt his own and others? Yea, what though his judgments single out the best, and spare the worst? What though an Abel be killed in love, and a Cain survive in hatred; a bloody Dionysius die in his bed, and a good Josiah fall in battle? What though the belly of the wicked be filled with hidden treasures, and the teeth of the saints broken with gravel stones, yet still here is much matter of praise; for electing love has distinguished, though common providence did not; and whilst prosperity and impunity slay the wicked, even slaying and adversity shall benefit and save the righteous. . . .

Look upon all the creatures as in the hand of God, who manages them in all their motions, limiting, restraining, and determining them all at his pleasure.

Get this truth well settled by faith in your hearts; it will marvellously guard them against slavish fears. The first chapter of Ezekiel contains an admirable scheme, or draught of Providence; there you may see the living creatures who move the wheels, viz. the great affairs and turnings of things here below, coming unto Christ, who sits upon the throne, to receive new orders and instructions from him, ver. 24—26. And in Rev. vi. you read of white, black, and red horses, which are nothing else but the instruments which God employs in executing his judgments in the world, as wars, pestilence, and death: but when these horses are prancing, and trampling up and down the world, here is that may quiet our hearts, that God hath the reins in his hand. Wicked men are sometimes like mad horses, they would stamp the people of God under their feet, but that the bridle of Providence is in their lips, Job i. 11, 12. A lion at liberty is terrible to meet, but who is afraid of the lion in the keeper's hand? . . .

Quiet your trembling hearts, by recording and consulting your past experiences

of the care and faithfulness of God in former distresses.

These experiences are food for your faith in a wilderness condition, Psal. lxxiv. 14. By this David kept his heart in time of danger, 1 Sam. xvii. 37, and Paul his, 2 Cor. i. 10. It was sweetly answered by Silentiarius, when one told him that his enemies way-laid him to take away his life, 'Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?' If God take no care of me, how have I escaped hitherto? You may plead with God old experiences to procure new ones; for it is in pleading with God for new deliverances, as it is in pleading for new pardons. Now mark how Moses pleads on that account with God, *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, as thou hast forgiven them from Egypt until now*, Numb. xiv. 19. He doth not say as men do, Lord, this is the first fault, thou hast not been troubled before to sign their pardon: but, Lord, because thou hast pardoned them so often, I beseech thee pardon them once again. So in new straits, Lord, thou hast often heard, helped, and saved in former fears; therefore now help again, for with thee there is plenteous redemption, and thine arm is not shortened. . . .

Exercise holy trust in times of great distress.

Make it your business to trust God with your lives and comforts, and then your hearts will be at rest about them. So did David, Psal. lvi. 3, *At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee*; q. d. Lord, if at any time a storm rise, I will make bold to shelter me from it under the covert of thy wings. Go to God by acts of faith and trust, and never doubt but he will secure you. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee*, Isa. xxvi. 3. God takes it well when thou comest to him thus; Father, my life, my liberty, or estate, are hunted after, and I cannot secure them; O let me leave them in thy hand: the poor leaveth himself with thee; and doth his God fail him; No, *thou art the helper of the fatherless*, Psal. x. 14; that is, thou art the helper of the destitute one, that hath none to go to but God. And that is a sweet Scripture, *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*, Psal. cxii. 7; he doth not say, his ear shall be privileged from the report of evil tidings, he may

hear as sad tidings as other men, but his heart shall be privileged from the terror of those tidings, *his heart is fixed*.

FLAVEL.

It is good for a man not always to keep his eyes at home; but sometimes to look abroad at his neighbours, and to compare his own condition with the worse estate of others. I know I deserve no more than the meanest, no better than the worst of men; yet how many do I see and hear to lie groaning upon their sick beds, in great extremity of torment; whereas I walk up and down in a competency of health! How many do I see ready to famish, and forced to either beg or starve; whereas I eat my own bread! How many lie rotting in jails and dungeons, or are driven to wander in unknown deserts, or amongst people whose knowledge they understand not; whereas I enjoy home and liberty! How many are shrieking under scourges and racks; whereas I sit at ease! And if I shall cast mine eyes upon my spiritual condition, alas, how many do I see sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; whereas the *Sun of Righteousness hath risen to me with healing in his wings!* How many lie in a woful bondage under sin and Satan; whereas my Saviour hath freed me from those hellish chains, and brought me into the *glorious liberty of the sons of God!* How many are miserably misled into the dangerous by-paths of error; whereas he hath graciously kept me in the plain and sure way of his saving truth! If we do not sometimes make these not proud, but thankful comparisons; and look upon ourselves, not with direct beams, but by reflection upon others; we shall never be sensible enough of our own mercies.

BP. HALL.

Saints must look for Trials on earth.

It is the will of God, that his people should be a comforted people. The most evangelical part of the prophecy of Isaiah begins with this, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God*. He takes pleasure in their prosperity, he delights to see them cheerful, and to hear them sing at their work, and sing in his ways. Religion was never designed to make people melancholy. Wisdom's adversaries do her wrong, if they paint her in mourning, and wisdom's children do not do her right, if they give the occasion to do so; for though they are, like St. Paul, as sorrowful, yet they should be, like him, *always*

rejoicing, because though they seem, perhaps, to have nothing, yet really they possess all things. So good a Master do we serve, that he has been pleased to twist interests with us, and so to compound his glory and our comfort, that in seeking the one, we seek the other also. He has made that to be our duty, which is indeed our greatest privilege, and that is to delight ourselves alway in the Lord, and to live a life of complacency in him. And it is the New Testament character of a Christian indeed, that *he rejoiceth in Christ Jesus*. . . .

Those who have so much reason to rejoice, are often cast down, and in sorrow, and not altogether without cause. This state of probation and preparation is a mixed state, and it is proper enough it should be so, for the trial and exercise of various graces. In those whose hearts are visited by the day-spring from on high, the light is neither clear nor dark, it is neither day nor night. They have their comforts, which they would not exchange for the treasures of kings and princes; but withal they have their crosses, under which they groan, being burdened. They have their hopes, which are as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil; but withal they have their fears, for their warfare is not yet accomplished, they have not yet attained, neither are already perfect. They have their joys, such as the world can neither give nor take away, joys that a stranger does not intermeddle with; but withal they have their griefs; their way to Canaan lies through a wilderness, and their way to Jerusalem through the valley of Bacah. Their master was himself *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*, and they are to be his followers. We must not, therefore, think that either the present happiness of the saints, which in this world they are to expect, or their present holiness, which in this world they are to endeavour after, consists in such delights and joys, as leave no room for any mourning and sense of trouble; no, there is a sorrow that is a godly sorrow; a jealousy of ourselves, that is a godly jealousy: it is only a perfect love that casts out all fear and all grief, and this we are not to expect in this imperfect state. All tears shall not be wiped away from our eyes, nor shall sorrows and sighing quite flee away, till we come to Heaven. While we are here, we are in a vale of tears, and must conform to the temper of the climate; we are at

sea, and must expect to be tossed with tempests; we are in the camp, and must expect to be alarmed.

Our Lord Jesus has therefore provided such comfort for the relief of his people, in their present sorrowful state, as may serve to balance their griefs, and keep them from being pressed above measure; and he has instituted means for the application of those comforts to them, that they may never fear, may never be sorry, as those that have no hope or joy. The covenant of grace, as it is ministered in the everlasting Gospel, has in it a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady; so that they who have an interest in that covenant, and know it, may triumph with blessed Paul, *We are troubled on every side, yet we are not distressed; perplexed sometimes, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken of God; cast down, but not destroyed.* This is that which bears them up under all their burdens, comforts them in all their griefs, and enables them to rejoice in tribulation.

The word of God is written for this end, that their *joy may be full*, 1 John i. 4. and that *through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, they may have hope.* Precious promises are there treasured up, to be the foundations of their faith and hope, and consequently the fountains of their joy. Songs of thanksgiving are there drawn up for them, to refresh themselves with in their weary pilgrimage, and to have recourse to, for the silencing of their complaints. Ministers are appointed to be *the helpers of their joy*, and to speak comfort to such as mourn in Zion. The Sabbath is the day which the Lord has made for this very end, that they may *rejoice and be glad in it.* Prayer is appointed for the ease of troubled spirits, that in it they may pour out their complaints before God, and fetch in comfort from him; *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

MATT. HENRY.

You love perhaps to hear of such consolations as these, but you do not feel any urgent need of them; and after dwelling on them for an hour, you are tempted to let them pass away from your memories, as though they concerned you not. But you will need them. Your sunshine will not go with you all the way to the grave. As surely as you are the children of Christ, so surely will he make you ac-

quainted with *the days of darkness.* You know not how many of them may be your portion, nor how soon they may come. You know not what clouds may even now be gathering around your path; what fears, and discouragements, and temptations, and conflicts, may be near at hand. Expect trials. Prepare for them. Take unto you *the whole armour of God.* Let the *word of Christ dwell in you richly.* Treasure up in your memory its precious promises. When trouble comes, let it find you ready, waiting to receive, and strengthened to endure it.

And what does this text say to you who are beginning to be afflicted and tossed, in your way to heaven? It bids you put to yourselves the question of the troubled Job, *What, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* Shall we take the comforts he has prepared for his children, and murmur at his corrections? He measures out to us good and evil, light and darkness, with infinite wisdom and love; and we must learn to receive both with equal thankfulness. There may be changes and counterchanges in our lot; and what if there be? Through the power of the Holy Ghost, they are subduing our corruptions, exercising our graces, bringing us to a more simple dependence on our God. And he who sends them, marks them all, controuls them all, turns them all to one blessed end.

Rest satisfied, brethren, with this truth, that, however mysterious and perplexing many things within you and around you may seem, they are all parts of one and the same plan; that this plan is continually before the Lord; that it has been so from your cradle, and will be so to your grave; that he studied and arranged it in eternity, and in eternity will glorify himself for the grace which it displays. Your own lips shall praise him there—praise him, not merely for the love that formed you for himself, the Saviour who redeemed, the Spirit who sanctifies, and the heavenly consolations which refresh you, but praise him for the troubles which have brought you low, the conflicts which have made you tremble, the sorrows that have almost broken your heart, and the weakness that has subdued it. And the time is drawing nigh. The night is already *far spent, the day is at hand*, a cloudless, never ending day. Let us look forward to it. Let us look at *the things which are not seen.* Let

us think of them till, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, we can say with the happy Paul, *I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

REV. C. BRADLEY.

The Reasonableness of present Afflictions.

To shew the reasonableness of present afflictions, consider,—they are the way to rest;—they keep us from mistaking our rest,—and from losing our way to it; they quicken our pace towards it; they chiefly incommode our flesh; and under them God's people have often the sweetest foretastes of their rest.

1. Consider, that labour and trouble are the common way to rest, both in the course of nature and grace. Can there possibly be rest without weariness? Do you not travail and toil first, and rest after? The day for labour is first, and then follows the night for rest. Why should we desire the course of grace to be perverted, any more than the course of nature? It is an established decree, that *we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*, Acts xiv. 22. And that *if we suffer, we shall also reign with Christ*, 2 Tim. ii. 12. And what are we, that God's statutes should be reversed for our pleasure?

2. Afflictions are exceeding useful to us, to keep us from mistaking our rest. A Christian's motion towards heaven is voluntary, and not constrained. Those means therefore are most profitable, which help his understanding and will. The most dangerous mistake of our souls is, to take the creature for God, and earth for heaven. What warm, affectionate, eager thoughts have we of the world, till afflictions cool and moderate them! Afflictions speak convincingly, and will be heard when preachers cannot. Many a poor Christian is sometimes bending his thoughts to wealth, or flesh-pleasing, or applause; and so loses his relish of Christ, and the joy above; till God break in upon his riches, or children, or conscience, or health, and break down his mountain which he thought so strong. And then when he lieth in Ma-

nasseh's fetters, or is fastened to his bed with pining sickness, the world is nothing, and heaven is something. If our dear Lord did not put these thorns under our head, we should sleep out our lives and lose our glory.

3. Afflictions are also God's most effectual means to keep us from losing our way to our rest. Without this hedge of thorns, on the right hand and left, we should hardly keep the way to heaven. If there be but one gap open, how ready are we to find it, and turn out at it! When we grow wanton, or worldly, or proud, how doth sickness, or other affliction reduce us! Every Christian, as well as Luther, may call affliction one of his best schoolmasters; and with David may say, *Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now have I kept thy word*, Psal. cxix. 67. Many thousand recovered sinners may cry, 'O healthful sickness! O comfortable sorrows! O gainful losses! O enriching poverty! O blessed day that ever I was afflicted!' Not only the *green pastures*, and *still waters*, but *the rod and staff they comfort us*. Though the word and Spirit do the main work, yet suffering so unbolts the door of our heart, that the word hath easier entrance.

4. Afflictions likewise serve to quicken our pace in the way to our rest. It were well if mere love would prevail with us, and that we were rather drawn to heaven, than driven. But seeing our hearts are so bad, that mercy will not do it; it is better to be put on with the sharpest scourge, than loiter, like *the foolish virgins*, till *the door is shut*. O what difference is there betwixt our prayers in health and in sickness; betwixt our repentings in prosperity and adversity! Alas! if we did not sometime feel the spur, what a slow pace would most of us hold toward heaven? Since our vile natures require it, why should we be unwilling that God should do us good by sharp means? Judge, Christian, whether thou dost not go more watchfully and speedily in the way to heaven, in thy sufferings, than in thy more pleasing and prosperous state.

5. Consider further, it is but the flesh that is chiefly troubled and grieved by afflictions. In most of our sufferings the soul is free, unless we ourselves wilfully afflict it. 'Why then, O my soul, dost thou side with this flesh, and complain, as it complaineth? It should be thy work to

keep it under, and bring it into subjection; and if God do it for thee, shouldst thou be discontented? Hath not the pleasing of it been the cause of almost all thy spiritual sorrows? Why then may not the displeasing of it further thy joys? Must not *Paul and Silas sing*, because *their feet are in the stocks*? Their spirits were not imprisoned. Ah, unworthy soul! is this thy thanks to God for preferring thee so far before thy body? When it is rotting in the grave, thou shalt be a companion of the perfected spirits of the just. In the mean time, hast thou not consolation which the flesh knows not of? Murmur not then at God's dealings with thy body; if it were for want of love to thee, he would not have dealt so by all his saints. Never expect thy flesh should truly expound the meaning of the rod. It will call love, hatred; and say, God is destroying, when he is saving. It is the suffering party, and therefore not fit to be the judge.' Could we once believe God, and judge of his dealings by his word, and by their usefulness to our souls, and reference to our rest, and could we stop our ears against all the clamours of the flesh, then we should have a truer judgment of our afflictions.

6. Once more consider, God seldom gives his people so sweet a foretaste of their future rest, as in their deep afflictions. He keeps his most precious cordials for the time of our greatest faintings and dangers. He gives them, when he knows they are needed, and will be valued; and when he is sure to be thanked for them, and his people rejoiced by them. Especially when our sufferings are more directly for his cause, then he seldom fails to sweeten the bitter cup. The martyrs have possessed the highest joys. When did Christ preach such comforts to his disciples, as when *their hearts were sorrowful* at his departure? When did he appear among them, and say, *Peace be unto you*, but when they were shut up for fear of the Jews? When did Stephen *see heaven opened*, but when he was giving up his life for the testimony of Jesus? Is not that our best state, wherein we have most of God? Why else do we desire to come to heaven? If we look for a heaven of fleshly delights, we shall find ourselves mistaken. Conclude then, that affliction is not so bad a state for a saint in his way to rest. Are we wiser than God? Doth he not know what is good for us as well as

we? Or is he not as careful of our good, as we of our own? Woe to us, if he were not much more so! and if he did not love us better than we love either him or ourselves.

Say not, 'I could bear any other affliction but this.' If God had afflicted thee where thou canst bear it, thy idol would neither have been discovered nor removed. Neither say, 'If God would deliver me out of it, I could be content to bear it.' Is it nothing that he hath promised it *shall work for thy good*? Is it not enough that thou art sure to be delivered at death? Nor let it be said, 'If my affliction did not disable me for duty, I could bear it.' It doth not disable thee for that duty which tendeth to thy own personal benefit, but is the greatest quickening help thou canst expect. As for the duty to others, it is not thy duty when God disables thee. . . . Do not plead, 'If I had but that consolation, which you say God reserveth for suffering times, I should suffer more contentedly; but I do not perceive any such thing.' The more you suffer for righteousness' sake, the more of this blessing you may expect; and the more you suffer for your own evil doing, the longer it will be before that sweetness comes. Are not the comforts you desire, neglected or resisted? Have your afflictions wrought kindly with you, and fitted you for comfort? It is not mere suffering that prepares you for comfort, but the success and fruit of sufferings upon your hearts.

BAXTER.

Who can say that any part of God's dispensations was not needful in the order of means to his reaching Heaven? We are so full of folly and perverseness and worldliness, so subject to declension in religion, so apt to be languid and cold and formal, so ready to relapse into temptation, so prone to choose a flowery path rather than a safe one, so little able to judge of our dangers and our enemies, that we should inevitably depart from our God, if his gracious care did not order and direct the affairs of life so as to promote, not our feelings, but our graces, not our fond schemes and projects, but our attention to our heavenly vocation, not the interests of time, but of eternity, not our ease, but our salvation. And surely if we resign ourselves, nay, submit with gratitude, to salutary, medical discipline, however painful or severe, much more should we lie patiently in the hands of

that heavenly Physician who understands intimately all our spiritual maladies, who perceives the tendency of our circumstances, who knows the stations to which he means to call us, and sees the indispensable necessity of preventing or checking the pride and vanity and self-confidence to which we are so greatly prone. Oh! infinite mystery of Divine mercy, wisdom, and grace! O the unsearchable depths of the counsels of redemption! And is it then in this way, O our God and Saviour, that unknown to us thou art furthering our final salvation? How unfathomable is thy love, that after the sacrifice of thy own life on the cross, thou hast condescendingly brought us to thyself by the secret energy of thy Spirit, and still guardest us in the ways of righteousness by thy providential controul! And is it thus that thou leadest us, as thou didst Israel of old, in order to humble us and to prove us, to know what is in our hearts, to do us good at our latter end? Is it thus that thou bringest us by a right way to a city of habitation? O continue thy goodness and mercy to us; O leave us not to our own wisdom; but administer to us such discipline as thou seest needful for us; O preserve us in thy faith, fear, and love, and 'grant that we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal.'

REV. D. WILSON.

The Uses and Ends of Affliction.

THERE are many gracious ends, respecting believers themselves, wherefore God doth afflict them: as, to exercise their graces, to keep them humble and dependent, to starve up their lusts, to wean them from the world, and to fit them for a better. But the great end, respecting God himself, is, that, by these afflictions, they might know and see how holy a God they have to deal with; who doth so perfectly hate sin, that he will follow it with chastisements wheresoever it be found. Though the sin be pardoned, though the sinner be beloved; yet God will afflict him: not, indeed, to satisfy his justice, for that is done for him by Jesus Christ; but to satisfy his holiness, and vindicate the honour of his purity in the world, and himself too from contempt, when those, who will presume to offend, shall certainly smart for it: 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

The afflictions and evils, that believers

suffer, are not inflicted by God, that thereby he might satisfy his justice upon them; and, therefore, they are not from the curse of the law, nor properly punishments for their sins.

Punishment always connotes satisfaction for transgressing the law. But this satisfaction to Divine justice is not to be wrought out by believers themselves; and, therefore, whatsoever they suffer is not strictly punishment. Christ hath fully satisfied all the demands of justice; and, therefore, no further satisfaction is expected from them, since that could not be consistent with the rules and measures of justice to punish both the surety and principal too. The curse of the law poured all its poison into Christ; and there is not one drop of it that falls besides upon believers: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13. For that death, and all those evils threatened in the covenant of works, are curses; not merely because they are grievous and afflicting; but because inflicted on transgressors in order to the satisfaction of Divine justice upon them. And therefore Christ is said to be accursed, and his death to have been an accursed death, (*Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*,) not because he died, nor because he died a most bitter, painful, and shameful death; but because he was ordained to undergo this death, as a satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of men. And, truly, should God inflict those very evils which he now doth upon believers, to the end that he might thereby raise some satisfaction to his justice, though the evils themselves would not be greater, nor more sharp and painful, yet they would all be curses, and make them too accursed creatures: for the true notion of a curse and of a punishment, consists not in the quality or the measure of the evil suffered; but in the inflicting of it as penal, and in order to the satisfaction of justice.

Hence, therefore, with what calmness and sweet peace may a true Christian look upon all his afflictions! Though they be sore and heavy, and seem to carry much wrath in them, yet they have nothing of the curse. The sting was received, all of it, into the body of Christ: so that now the covenant of works is disarmed to him; and he need not fear the dreadful thunder of its threatenings, for the bolt is already discharged upon another. Indeed, were

it God's intent to satisfy his justice by the evils which he brings upon me, I might then tremble with horror and astonishment; and account every the slightest suffering a presage and pledge of far greater and eternal to come: but if I have an interest in the righteousness of Christ, justice is already satisfied, and the curse removed; and all the sorrows and afflictions which I suffer, are but the corrections of a gracious Father, not the revenge of an angry God. Am I pinched by poverty? that is no curse: God doth not seek revenge upon me; but only keeps me from the allurements to sin and vanity. Am I afflicted with losses in my relations or estate? that is no curse: God doth not thereby seek satisfaction to his justice; but only takes these from me, that he might be all in all. Am I tormented with pain, and weakened with diseases; and will these bring death upon me? yet diseases and death itself are no curses; but only a necessary passage from life to life, a bad step to Canaan, a short night between one day and another. Revenging justice is satisfied: and, therefore, come what afflictions it shall please God to try me with, they are all weak and weaponless; without sting, without curse in them.

But, most sad and miserable is the condition of wicked men, whose infidelity excludes them from having a right in the sufferings of Christ. For there is not the least affliction that befalls them, the least gripe of any pain, the least loss in their estates, the most slight and inconsiderable cross that is, but it comes upon them through the curse of the law. God is, by these, beginning to satisfy his justice upon them; and sends these to arrest and seize them. Every affliction is to them but part of payment of that vast and endless sum of plagues, which God will, most severely and to the very utmost farthing, exact of them in hell.

BP. HOPKINS.

Those graces that would possibly grow heavy and unwieldy, by too much ease, are held in breath, and increase their activity and strength, by conflict. Divine grace, even in the heart of weak and sinful man, is an invincible thing. Drown it in the waters of adversity, it rises more beautiful, as not being drowned indeed, but only washed; throw it into the furnace of fiery trials, it comes out purer, and

loses nothing but the dross which our corrupt nature mixes with it. Thus the Apostle here expounds the *if need be*, 1 Pet. i. 6. and so justifies the joy in afflictions, which there he speaks of, by their utility and the advantage faith derives from them: it is so tried that it shall appear in its full brightness, at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

LEIGHTON.

We find in the history of the patriarchs, that every new difficulty and trial with which they met, furnished a fresh opportunity for God to manifest himself, to renew his covenant and confirm his promises. And God never appeared but when urgent necessity called for his presence, either to support them under pressures and trials, or to call them to new duties, for the manifestation, in its effects, of their grace, and of his glory. As their difficulties abounded, their supports and comforts were multiplied. O blessed exchange! Outward ease and tranquillity, for spiritual joy and growth in the divine life. Who that has any hatred of sin or any love to God in his heart, would not wish to carry on a daily exchange so comfortable and so advantageous to the soul? No outward trouble, I am sure, ever did, or ever can give me so much uneasiness and sorrow, as the incessant workings of my corruptions continually do. I hope, therefore, to be evermore thankful for every cross, disappointment, sickness, trouble, &c. which hath the smallest tendency to weaken my corruptions, to make me more dead to the world and to myself, and more alive to God and the things of God. There is within me so much pride to be subdued, so much worldly-mindedness to be destroyed, so much unbelief to be rooted out, and so much self to be denied, that my heart should overflow with gratitude, when I feel God's hand upon me, however heavy it may be, carrying on the work of holiness in subduing or weakening any of these sinful tempers and dispositions, and accomplishing that glorious work to which my feeble strength is unequal. I hope to look more to the end, than to the means; to look beyond the rod and the chastisement, to 'the peaceable fruits of righteousness which it yieldeth to them who are exercised with it.' As nothing but holiness will be of any value or any real service to me in the end, may I be thankful for every thing,

however unpleasant and grievous now, which may tend to promote it in my soul. So the end is but obtained, I am perfectly satisfied with the means which infinite wisdom, influenced by infinite goodness, may think proper to appoint.

God has not, like earthly parents, any foolish tenderness or fondness which may prevent him from using the rod, when necessary for the benefit and real interest of his children. He delivered Job into Satan's hand from love to him; foreseeing how he would bring him out of the furnace like gold purified in the fire. As God, therefore, never on any occasion prefers the ease of his children to their holiness, I hope in every thing to be of the same mind, always receiving every thing with thankfulness from his gracious hand, who has assured me that every thing shall work together for good. O precious promise! It is like the tree which Moses cast into the waters of Marah. It makes the bitterest water of affliction sweet and wholesome. Like the philosopher's stone, it turns every thing into gold. When I find, actually and experimentally, all working for my good, I feel gratitude in some degree influencing my heart; but when I do not find present good issuing from present evil, I often find it very difficult to believe the promises, and to rest satisfied that it will certainly be so in the end, however unlikely the event may at present appear. Our unbelief, however, makes not the faith of God without effect. He remains faithful, and will abundantly accomplish all his promises. It comforts me, therefore, to think that it will be so, though my faith in that truth is often very weak and feeble. His promises depend not on my faith, but on his own faithfulness, which is eternal and unchangeable like himself. . . .

Though we are not at home, yet if every thing works effectually to bring us daily nearer, in the temper of our minds and in the frame of our hearts, what cause for thankfulness! Blessed is that cross which humbles our pride,—and that disappointment which makes us more resigned to God's will,—and that sickness which crucifies us more to the world and the world to us,—and that poverty which makes us richer in grace,—and that contempt of the world which makes us cleave more to God and value more highly his favour and approbation; yea, blessed is

that event which takes away *all* the props which we in any degree depend on for the smallest portion of our happiness, and thus brings us to depend and live wholly on God. Till then we shall never be happy, or glorify God our Redeemer in any suitable manner. When we make him alone our strength and portion, we are never disappointed, but ever abundantly satisfied as with marrow and fatness. I long to be swallowed up entirely in him, and be possessed entirely by him. The hope of such a desirable event fills me with transports of joy. REV. T. CHARLES.

Let, then, the believer be induced to look upon his present afflictions, of whatever kind, in a very different light from what unbelief would represent them. The Gospel opens a most encouraging view to the mind. Ye oppressed, ye afflicted, ye tried and tempted, tossed with tempests and not comforted, consider it well. Those things which so alarm your fears are the means the Lord is using to promote your best, because your spiritual and eternal, interest; that which you would prefer before all things, if you were but as wise as he. They flow from the abundance of his love, the unchangeableness of his purposes of grace; from that mercy which is from everlasting to everlasting, and which secures that all the ways of the Lord should be *mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies*. He is hewing the living stones of his church for the spiritual building, the temple on Mount Sion, that they may be prepared for the place designed for them there, before they are brought there, that there may be no more hewing there. He is cleansing his people from the pollution that is in the world, that he may fit them for the world of light and purity, and make them meet to be *partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*. He is melting down the metal that he may purify it, that, divested of its dross, he may again cast it into his own mould, to restore that image which was defaced, or rather destroyed, that it may bear his Divine impression with perfect purity and glory, throughout eternity. Not a grain shall be lost, though it pass through the fiery trial: it shall be his eternal treasure. . . . He sits by, observing the whole: he has well observed the need they stand in of the trying dispensation; what peculiar trials are suited to their state;

and what degrees they may be able to endure. He sees how they bear under it, the effects which it produces. He is intent upon and examining the process: it shall neither be too little nor too much; but, in time, in nature, and in measure, suited to answer the purpose of the great Redeemer in the purification and preservation of his people. . . . If in heaviness through manifold temptations, it is, *that the trial of faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found to praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ,* 1 Pet. i. 7.

The great object, therefore, which ought to engage our attention in all, is, that which we are always too apt to neglect, *the design of God*. The due consideration of this, would tend to produce a spirit of humiliation under it, of resignation to his will, of faith and dependence, of holy confidence in future trial, while the trial of faith wrought patience, experience, and hope, Rom. v. 3, &c., and of holy conformity to the image and will of God. These are tempers in which we should meet afflictions with profit, to the glory of God and our own edification and consolation. Thus they would all be found working together for good, and promote that grand end, which he will certainly accomplish towards all his people, in the world to come.

REV. W. GOODE.

Afflictions try the pureness of a Christian's Faith.

THE furnace of afflictions shews upright real faith, to be such indeed, remaining still the same even in the fire, the same that it was, undiminished, as good gold loses none of its quantity in the fire. Doubtless many are deceived, in time of ease and prosperity, with imaginary faith and fortitude: so that there may be still some doubt, while a man is underset with outward helps, as riches, friends, esteem, &c., whether he leans upon those, or upon God, who is an invisible support, though stronger than all that are visible, and is the peculiar and alone stay of faith in all conditions. But when all these outward props are plucked away from a man, then it will be manifest, whether something else upholds him or not; for if there be nothing else, then he falls: but if his mind stands firm and unremoved as before, then it is evident he laid not his weight upon

these things which he had then about him, but was built upon a foundation though not seen, which is able alone to stay him, although he be not only frustrated of all other supports, but beaten upon with storms and tempests; as our Saviour says, *the house fell not, because it was founded upon a rock*, Matt. vii. 25.

This testified the truth of David's faith, who found it stay his mind upon God, when there was nothing else near that could do it: *I had fainted, unless I had believed*, Psa. xxvii. 13. So in his strait, 1 Sam. xxx. 6, where it is said, that *David was greatly distressed; but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God*. Thus, Psa. lxxiii. 26, *My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever*. The heart's natural strength of spirit and resolution may bear up under outward weakness, or the failing of the flesh; but when the heart itself fails, which is the strength of the flesh, what shall strengthen it? nothing but God, *who is the strength of the heart and its portion for ever*. Thus faith worketh alone, when the case suits that of the Prophet's, Hab. iii. 17, *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, &c., yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation*.

In spiritual trials, which are the sharpest and most fiery of all, when the furnace is within a man, when God doth not only shut up his loving-kindness from his feeling, but seems to shut it up in hot displeasure, when he writes bitter things against him, yet then to depend upon him, and wait for his salvation, and the more he smites, the more to cleave to him,—this is not only a true, but a strong, and very refined faith indeed. Well might he say, *When I am tried I shall come forth as gold*, who could say that word, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*: though I saw, as it were, his hand lifted up to destroy me, yet from that same hand would I expect salvation. LEIGHTON.

Therefore, rejoice now in the midst of all your sufferings. Stand upon the advanced ground of the promises and the covenant of grace, and by faith look beyond this moment, and all that is in it, to that day wherein *everlasting joy shall be upon your heads*, a crown of it, and *sorrow and mourning shall flee away*, Isa. li. 11. Believe in this day, and the victory

is won. Oh! that blessed hope, well fixed and exercised, would give other manner of spirits. What zeal for God would it not inspire! What invincible courage against all encounters! How soon will this pageant of the world vanish, that men are gazing on, these pictures and fancies of pleasures and honours, falsely so called, and give place to the real glory of the sons of God, when this blessed Son, who is God, shall be seen appearing in full majesty, and all his brethren in glory with him, all clothed in their robes! And if you ask, Who are they? Why, *these are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb*, Rev. vii. 14.

LEIGHTON.

The Saints need not fear for the safety of Christ's Church.

THESE are days of great confusion in the Christian world, and the chief fear of a gracious heart is for the ark, lest that should fall into the enemy's hand, and when this palladium is taken, the city of God (his Church) be trod under the feet of pride. I confess Satan seems to get ground daily. He hath sadly corrupted the truths of Christ, brought a disesteem on ordinances: he hath had advantage by the divisions of the godly, to harden those that are wicked into a further disdain of religion. And now, Christian, the confidence of thine enemies, together with the distracted state of Christ's affairs in the world, may discompose thy spirit, concerning the issue of these providences that are rolling over our heads; but be still, poor heart, and know, that the contest is not between the Church and Satan, but between Christ and him: these are the two champions. Stand now, O ye army of saints, still by faith, to see the all-wise God wrestle with the subtle devil. That faith which ascribes greatness and wisdom to God, will shrink up Satan's subtilty into a thing of nothing. Unbelief fears Satan as a lion; faith treads on him as a worm. Behold thy God at work, and be sure, that though man's wisdom may be levelled with folly, God is never interrupted. All the plots of hell and commotions of earth cannot foil him. The mystery of his providence may hang a curtain before his work, that we cannot see what he is doing; but then, *when darkness is about him, righteousness is the seat of his*

throne for ever. Yea, what though the church were like Jonah in the whale's belly, swallowed up to the eye of reason, by the fury of men, yet dost not thou remember the whale had not power to destroy the prophet? O be not too quick to bury the Church before she be dead. Stay whilst Christ tries his skill before you give it over; bring Christ by your prayers to its grave, to speak a resurrection word. Indeed God counts himself exceedingly disparaged in the thoughts of his people (though at the lowest ebb of his church's affairs) if his naked word, and single bond of his promise, will not be taken as sufficient security to their faith, for its deliverance. GURNALL.

Learn to put a right construction on all God's dealings with his church, and with thy soul. With regard to his church, there may be a time wherein thou shalt see it not only tossed, but, to thy thinking, covered and swallowed up with tears: but wait a little, it shall arrive safe. This is a common stumbling stone, but walk by the light of the word, and the eye of Faith looking on it, and thou shalt pass by and not stumble at it. The church mourns, and Babylon sings—*sits as a queen*; but for how long? She shall *come down and sit in the dust*; and Sion shall be glorious, *and put on her beautiful garments*, while Babylon shall not look for another revolution to raise her again; no, she shall never rise. *And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus, with violence, shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all*, Rev. xviii. 21.

Be not hasty: take God's work together, and do not judge of it by parcels. It is indeed all wisdom and righteousness; but we shall best discern the beauty of it, when we look on it in the frame, when it shall be fully completed and finished, and our eyes enlightened to take a fuller and clearer view of it than we can have here. Oh, what wonder, what endless wondering will it then command!

We read of Joseph hated, and sold, and imprisoned, and all most unjustly, yet, because within a leaf or two, we find him freed and exalted, and his brethren coming as supplicants to him, we are satisfied. But when we look on things which are for the present cloudy and dark, our short-sighted, hasty spirits cannot learn to wait

a little, till we see the other side, and what end the Lord makes. We see *judgment beginning at the house of God*, and this perplexes us while we consider not the rest, *What shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel?* God begins the judgment on his church for a little time, that it may end and rest upon his enemies for ever. And indeed, he leaves the wicked last in the punishment, that he may make use of them for the punishment of his church. They are *his rod*, Isa. x. 5; but when he hath done that work with them, they are *broken and burnt*, and that, when they are at the height of their insolence and boasting, not knowing what hand moves them, and smites his people with them for a while, *till the day of their consuming come*, ver. 16, 24, 25.

LEIGHTON.

The church of Christ is the city of the Lord, the place which he has chosen; walled around by his grace, his wisdom, his care, his almighty power, and covenant love. Here is its only, but here is its un-failing, protection from every enemy and danger. O believer! realize thy security, and let faith give glory to the Rock of thy salvation. But let the guilty impenitent, amidst his gaiety and mirth, lay to heart the awful exposure of his state. The world, without Christ, without his grace, is without the walls of salvation. Like a town thrown open and exposed to the ravages of the enemies which surround it, without the least protection or defence. The roaring lion, or the raging bear, yea, every devouring or malicious enemy, may break in, O sinner; ruin thy comfort, and destroy thy soul. Out of Christ, a prey to thy lusts, thy passions, and thy sins, nothing can protect thee from their assaults, or deliver thee from the wrath of an offended God. Thou art exposed to every attack; and canst find no shelter nor retreat when guilty fears invade, when afflictions press hard upon thy dying body; when death, the great enemy, surrounded with his numerous host, the pallid legions of pains, sorrows, agonies, and groans, approaches to break down thy mortal frame. And what wilt thou do then, when the Almighty shall awake to judgment? Fly, then, to this City of Refuge, and place thyself under the care of our Jesus, the only Deliverer from guilt and sin, from present sorrows or the wrath to come.

REV. W. GOODE.

Christ our Help in Trials and Afflictions.

IN the Christian life I have duties to perform; but where shall I look, when of myself I can do nothing,—when I feel that I am not sufficient of myself *to think any thing as of myself?* The real believer is desirous of living to the glory of God, and therefore of acting agreeably to his calling, and suitably to the duties of his station. He would live in the exercises of faith and love; he would be lively in devotion, earnest in prayer, and ardent in praise; he would be patient in trial, diligent in duties, and active in services, in the elevation of holy joy, and the ready performance of willing obedience; but *when he would do good, evil is present with him*, and he feels *a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind*. In himself, *that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing; who then shall deliver him from the body of sin and death?* who shall set him free from *the bondage of corruption*, and confirm him in *the glorious liberty of the children of God?* Never will he be better; never will he obtain any aid but by looking unto Jesus; and out of *his fulness* he must *receive grace for grace*; for he alone of *God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. The living branch must be united to the living Vine: it must *abide in the Vine* if it ever become fruitful, for separate from it the branch itself will soon wither and decay. The stream must be constantly supplied from the ever-flowing Fountain, or the stream itself will be dried up; but the branch, abiding in the Vine, will *bring forth much fruit*; and the stream, constantly supplied from the Fountain, will flow unceasingly, and spread its different currents to refresh and beautify the surrounding fields. Hence the Apostle was taught both *how to be abased and how to abound: every where, and in all things*, says he, *I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need*. *I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 12, 13. Is not the Lord Jesus still the same in himself? and is he not still the same to all his people? Are not his promises as really given, and as faithful and true to us, as they were to the Apostle? If we were living more by the faith of the Son of God, we should have a more abundant discovery of his glories and his grace, and

should thus bring them more into exercise and enjoyment. Let the prayer of faith be continually entreating the supplies of grace, from him who is full of grace and truth; in whom all fulness dwells, and who is the Head and Root of his believing people; and the promise of God secures the supply in rich communication to the glory of his name, and to the comfort and safety of our souls.

While in this body I must feel the effects of sin, in varied afflictions which lead down to the gates of death and of the grave. I know not what or which of the multiplied diseases and afflictions which sin has introduced, may seize upon my frame; nor when they may receive their commission from the great Disposer of all, from him who hath the keys of death and of the grave. But Jesus has taken away the sting of all, and can turn, by his presence and his grace, the bitterest sorrow into joy; death into life, and the grave into the gate of heaven. Though I go down to the grave, there has my Jesus been before me: there has he triumphed and passed through, and carried the gates of death to the hill of Sion. He who is the helper of his people, will not fail them at that moment when they most stand in need of his sustaining power. When all other helpers must fail, must withdraw for ever, then he will stand by and conduct through the gloomy vale: his rod and his staff will be their stay and their support; and when flesh and heart fail, he will be the strength of their heart and their portion for ever.

Read his promise, O humble believer! In the exercise of faith embrace it with holy delight: trust it with confident assurance: *Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee,* Isa. xliii. 1—3, &c. Oh, let me then adore and trust that blessed Jesus who is the helper, the only helper, but the all-sufficient helper, of helpless sinners! How absurd is the conduct of the man, and how dangerous his state, who

ventures to live without Christ; without seeking an interest in Christ; without placing himself under his eye and care, in the most implicit dependence and submission! Daily are we reminded of our own weakness and insufficiency, and of our state of sin and misery. We have wants, which none but Jesus can supply; sins, which none but Jesus can pardon; enemies, which none but he can subdue; fears, which none but he can allay; trials, afflictions, temptations, and distresses, under which none but he, with his almighty power and grace, can support. Never can we meet affliction or death with peace and joy, but through him; nor shall we ever be able to stand before a holy God with acceptance, but as in him: yet these are circumstances into which we must all and every one ultimately be brought. Why then should the sinner neglect the only Saviour, the only one who can effectually help us, in this trying season? If the sinner comes to him, his promise assures him that he shall not be cast away: his grace is ready, and his fulness all-sufficient. But if the sinner neglect to secure an interest in his care and blessings, nothing in heaven or in earth can ever deliver him from the sentence of the law, the curse of sin, and the wrath of God. In the Christian course through life, here must the believer be continually seeking the supplies he needs; and to run the Christian race aright, he must be looking off from all besides, to look to Jesus. . . .

Realize then, O believer! by faith, your privilege and your security: and when depressed with enemies, difficulties, and dangers, turn your eyes to him who is able to deliver. He has graciously encouraged your trust and confidence. What covenant love, what infinite wisdom, what almighty power, what constant care, what abounding grace, is treasured up in Jesus; and for the very purpose, that he might be the faithful, the effectual helper of his church! His promise secures the whole, in all their unfailling exercises, to promote and effect the eternal salvation of his people. How then can his promise fail; the promise of him who cannot lie, the promise of the God of truth, the promise of the Infinite, Eternal, Almighty Jehovah; a promise made, not for our worthiness, but of his own grace, and therefore not to be prevented, in its fulfilment, by the demerit of

the objects? He delights to magnify his grace in bestowing his blessings upon the unworthy, when suppliant at his feet. His ability to perform is beyond a doubt; and who can suspect his faithfulness or truth? Let not then a sense of unworthiness discourage the exercise of my faith; since it is not upon this I plead, when supplicating at the throne, but upon the infinite atonement, righteousness, and redemption of the Saviour, together with the promises of his grace made through him, and secured by the faithfulness of the Promiser to the most unworthy who fly to him for refuge. —Whatever may be my sin and guilt, he is able to deliver me by the merit of that precious blood that cleanseth from all sin, and through which we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sin. Whatever are my trials and distresses; however intricate and perplexing; still he is able to become my effectual helper to the very end. He bids me in all to trust in him, to cast my burden upon him, and he will sustain me, &c. The omnipresent, omniscient, the almighty, the infinite Jehovah can never be at a loss for means to effect deliverance, or to supply with grace and consolation. His help shall never fail, till I am got beyond all my sins and fears, beyond all my afflictions and distresses, beyond all my difficulties and dangers; and then, though I shall not need the same help that I stand in need of here below, he will be my Eternal Helper, my eternal security, my source of everlasting blessedness, in the world to come; for *who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter: nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Rom. viii. 35—39.

REV. W. GOODE.

Faith sees that in God which answers all our fears, wants, and miseries.

FAITH, saving faith, doth see that in God, in Christ, which answers to all our fears, wants, and miseries. For faith

closeth with the name of God: *Let him stay himself upon the name of God*, Isa. l. 10. Now there is that in God's name, that doth answer to all our fears and wants. For example, *The Lord descended in the clouds* (stood with Moses), *and proclaimed the name of the Lord*, Exod. xxxiv. 5. *The Lord, the Lord: Jehovah, Jehovah*, ver. 6: that is, one that gives being unto things that are not. Will you say, O that it were thus, or thus with me! But as Rachel mourned for her children, and could not be comforted, because they were not: so do I mourn after prayers, after ordinances, and humiliations, because they are not. Well, saith the Lord, be of good comfort, for my name is Jehovah, who gives being to things that are not. And this he repeateth, *The Lord; the Lord; or Jehovah, Jehovah*. Well, but though the Lord doth give being to things that are not, it doth not comfort me. For though I praise the Lord, that I can say my prayers are, and my duties are; yet he knows they are very weak, and my temptations very strong, and my lusts mighty; and therefore I am thus discouraged. Yet be of good comfort; for saith the Lord, my name is **ל**; that is, the strong, the mighty God. And therefore, though you be ever so weak, and your duties weak, yet I will carry on the work of my grace in you; and though your temptations be ever so strong, and your lusts strong, yet I am stronger: for my name is **ל**, the mighty God. O! but though God be strong, and able to help me, yet I fear that God is not willing to help me. I know that God is able, and that God is strong enough; but I fear he is not willing: and therefore I am thus discouraged. Yet be of good comfort, saith the Lord; for my name is Merciful, the Lord, the Lord; the mighty God. And as I am the mighty God, and therefore able to help thee; so my name is Merciful: I am willing to help thee. But though the Lord be willing to help me, yet I am a poor unworthy creature, and I have nothing to move God to help me. Yet be of good comfort; for, saith the Lord, my name is Gracious. I do not shew mercy because *you* are good, but because *I am* good; nor do I stand upon *your* desert; but I shew mercy out of *free* love, my name is Gracious. Oh! but I have been sinning, I have been sinning a long time, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty

years. Had I come in at first, I might have obtained mercy, but I have been sinning long : and therefore I fear there is no mercy for me. Yet, saith the Lord, be of good comfort, for my name is long suffering ; gracious, and long suffering ; slow to anger, and of long suffering. Oh ! but I have sinned exceedingly, I have sinned abundantly ; so many sins as I am never able to reckon up, and to humble myself. For I have broken all my promises with God, all the vows that I made unto him : and therefore, I am thus discouraged. Yet, saith he, be of good comfort, for *I am abundant in goodness and truth* : Art thou abundant in sin ? I am abundant in goodness : And hast thou broken faith with me ? Yet I am abundant in goodness, and in truth also. O ! but though the Lord be thus unto his own chosen ones, such as David, Abraham, and Moses ; yet I fear that he will not be so to me. Yes, saith the Lord, at verse 7, *Keeping mercy for thousands* : I have not spent all my mercy upon David, Abraham, Paul, and Peter ; but I keep mercy for thousands. True : yet my sins recoil. I am the greatest sinner in the world ; for I have committed all sorts and all kind of sin ; and therefore I fear there is no hope for me. Yet, saith the Lord, be not discouraged ; for *I keep mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin* ; even all sorts, and all kind of sins ; original sin, and actual sin ; the sin of weakness, and the sin of presumption ; the sin of ignorance, and the sin against knowledge ; these, saith the Lord, I forgive, even all sorts, and all kind of sins : and this is my name for ever. O ! but I am afraid to lay hold upon this promise ; for I think this is a doctrine of liberty. Say not so, saith the Lord, at the next verse, *I will by no means clear the guilty* : but if there be ever a poor, drooping, fearing, trembling soul, who desires to know my name, lo, saith the Lord, this is my name, whereby I will be known for ever : the Lord Jehovah, that gives being to things that are not ; *The mighty God : the merciful God ; the gracious God ; abundant in goodness, and in truth ; reserving mercy for thousands ; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin* : and this is my name for ever. Now faith comes, and closeth with this name of God, leading the soul into this rich wardrobe, and so quiets the heart against all discouragements.

REV. W. BRIDGE.

Trust in God our support in troublous Times.

WOULD you be quiet, and have peace within in troublous times ? Keep near to God ; beware of any thing that may interpose betwixt you and your confidence. *It is good for me*, says the Psalmist, *to be near God* ; not only to draw near, but to keep near, to cleave to him, and dwell in him : so the word imports. O the sweet calm of such a soul amidst all storms ! Thus, once trusting and fixed, then no more fear : *he is not afraid of evil tidings*. Whatsoever sound is terrible in the ears of men, the noise of war, news of death, or even the sound of the trumpet in the last judgment, he hears all undisquieted. Nothing is unexpected. Being once fixed on God, then the heart may put cases to itself, and suppose all things imaginable, even the most terrible, and look for them ; not troubled before trouble comes, with dark and dismal apprehensions, but satisfied in a quiet unmoved expectation of the hardest things. Whatsoever it is, though not thought on particularly before, yet the heart is not afraid of the news of it, because it is *fixed, trusting in the Lord*. Nothing can shake that foundation nor dissolve that union ; therefore no fear. Yea, this assurance stays the heart in all things, how strange and unforeseen soever. All are foreseen to my God on whom I trust, yea, are fore-contrived and ordered by him. This is the impregnable fortress of a soul, all is at the disposal and command of my God ; my Father rules all ; what need I fear ? The soul trusting on God is prepared for all, and in the saddest apprehensions of the soul, beyond hope, believes against hope ; even in the darkest night, casts anchor in God, reposes on him when he sees no light, Isa. l. 10. Yea, *though he slay me*, says Job, *yet will I trust in him* ; not merely, though I die, but *though he slay me* : when I see his hand lifted up to destroy me, yet from that same hand will I look for salvation. . . . Even in public troubles there is a calm in the believer's mind. He is satisfied that in those judgments that are inflicted, man shall be humbled and God exalted, Isa. ii. 11, and v. 16 ; and that in all tumults, and changes, and subversions of states, still his throne is fixed, and with that the believer's heart likewise. So, Psa. xxix. 10, *the Lord sitteth upon the flood : yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever* :

or, *sat in the flood*, possibly referring to the general deluge; yet then God sat quiet, and still *sitteth King for ever*. He steered the ark, and still guides his church through all. So Psalm xlv. throughout. In all commotions, the kingdom of Christ shall be spreading and growing, and the close of all shall be full victory on his side: and that is sufficient for the believer.

Amidst all disorders, God is ordering all wisely and justly, and to them that love him, graciously; therefore we ought not to be dismayed. Let us calm our thoughts with this, remember who it is that rules all, and disposes of peace and war, and all affairs, and we cannot wish them in better hands. I am persuaded, that in all the commotions of the world, when a believer thinks on this, it cannot but calm and compose his spirit exceedingly, *My Father rules all*. Let this so quiet our fears, as that withal it quicken our prayers, and stir us up to the work of this day,—repentant humble seeking unto God; seeing all is in his hands, our peace, our liberties, and our enemies that threaten to bereave us of both. O that the effect of all our troubles and dangers were to drive us more to God, to make us throng more about the throne of grace, to draw forth our King for our help! O our impenitence and unreformedness, that turns him to be our enemy, and that only! Men are nothing. And now, in so great straits, yet so little calling on him! O my brethren, what are we doing? O pray, pray. It is our God that commands all, and we may say it upon his own warrant, it is prayer that commands him.

LEIGHTON.

The Benefit of minutely observing God's dealings in every circumstance.

WERE we to observe more minutely, God's dealings with us in every particular instance, and in every circumstance he brings us to, it would tend greatly to strengthen our faith, and to fill us with admiration of his infinite wisdom and goodness, in ordering at all times every thing in a manner most suitable to our present frame of mind, and to his purpose concerning us. His eye is never taken away from his people, but constantly and very narrowly observes the workings of their hearts, and brings them into such cir-

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cumstances as are best suited to improve their graces and mortify their corruptions. Job had, by his sore and heavy trials, both his impatience discovered, and his patience improved. His latent corruptions, pride and its offspring impatience, were before unobserved; but his trial brought them to light. It was exactly suited to accomplish God's purpose respecting him, and his improvement in patience and humility. It brought out, by the blessing of God, the traitors from their secret recesses, and exposed them to view in all their vileness and deformity; and Job in the end was enabled to put his feet on the neck of those his dangerous and treacherous enemies. Sometimes I have found that a circumstance in itself insignificant and trifling, will produce amazing effects. A great blessing on a thing of nought, will make it great and really important in its consequences. We should view every thing, not as it is in itself, but as it is in the hand of a great God, who makes use of *things that are not, to bring to nought things that are*. 'If we let things pass, however small and of little importance, as if they happened by chance, we must not expect to have any support under trials, or to get any lasting improvement by them. But when we see every thing, even the least, as under a divine direction, and ordered with the best and kindest design, we are led to form great expectations from the issue of things, and to wait patiently to see the end designed by God. Thus the sting of every trouble is taken away, and the due improvement of a quiet acquiescence under it, is greatly promoted. Thus it was with Job. He saw the hand of God in all his sufferings and trials. He doth not say, 'The Lord gave, and the Sabeans and Chaldeans have taken away:' but 'the Lord hath taken away.' His eye was single, and fixed only on God in every thing.

REV. T. CHARLES.

The History of Afflictive Dispensations should be fresh in the mind.

RECOLLECT, and bring before you the history of afflictive dispensations, as minutely and circumstantially as you can. Why should you not remember past corrections as well as past mercies? Especially, when you have all imaginable reason to be satisfied from experience, that corrections are not among the least mer-

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cies. Recollect, therefore, what sicknesses you have been visited with; what afflictions you have met with in your circumstances: what troubles you have gone through in the loss of relations and friends; what disappointments in worldly things have fallen upon you; and what of these was ministered to you in different stages of your life; in childhood, youth, manhood, and advanced years; together with the peculiar circumstances of such afflictions; how you were brought into it; how long it continued; and in what manner it ended? Be at pains to digest in your mind the history of your troubles, and the circumstances of time and manner, as nearly as you can; for hereby you shall gain a great insight into the wisdom and love of God, in his afflictive dealings with you.

When you have your past troubles before you, endeavour to see what was the occasion of them. Now, as you are fully sensible, that God's hand was in it, and he does not willingly (and much less needlessly) grieve his children, try to discover what was God's design in them? and what that was, it is likely you shall be more able to see, now that Providence has, by what followed, opened to you the meaning of a correction, than you could well do when you were actually under it. Now, that you may the better enter into this inquiry, you must know that afflictions have mostly one of these three designs; either to bring God's children to repentance for some sin they have fallen into, as

the three days' pestilence of the Israelites, to bring them to repentance; and also, David for his sin, in numbering the people: or, secondly, to prevent some great snare to their souls they were running into, and in danger of: or, thirdly, to exercise and strengthen grace, because of some trying circumstances they should be afterwards in; as was the case of Joseph, before his exaltation. Examining your afflictions by these three rules, you may come to some certainty about the reasons of God's visiting you: either you were in some sin, as pride, covetousness, sloth; and God meant to shew it you, and bring you to repentance for it: or you were in danger by means of some circumstance of life you were going into, and God meant to stop you from entering into temptation: or God meant to make some use of you, you were not yet fit for; and therefore exercised you with some seasonable and suitable trouble. Now, besides the general design of correction, which is to humble us, increase faith and love, and engage us to live more above the world; besides the general, to search out the special design of every affliction in this manner, cannot but be exceedingly useful, inasmuch as hereby we shall gain a peculiar insight into the case of our souls, what it has been, and thereby what it is; and, at the same time, an experimental proof of God's good-will towards our spiritual and eternal interest, vastly confirming to our faith.

REV. S. WALKER.

SECTION VI.—THE PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN.

The Christian's Experience of the Influence of the Holy Spirit.

It is a dangerous thing to be insensible of the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit. For how shall his presence be sought, whose absence is not known? And how shall he, who returns to console us, be worthily received, if his presence be not felt? May the unction, therefore, be never removed from us, the unction 1 John ii. 27, which teaches us of all

things, that when the Holy Spirit comes he may find us ready. He who walks in the Spirit never remains in one state. His way is not in himself; but as the Spirit dispenses to him, according to his good pleasure, now more faintly, now more eagerly, he forgets the things which are behind, and reaches forth to the things which are before. Distrust not, when thou findest weariness and torpor; seek the hand of thy Guide, beseeching him to draw thee, till thou be enabled to run the

way of God's commandments. And, on the other hand, beware of presumptuous confidence, when thou walkest in the light of divine consolation, lest, when he withdraws his hand, thou be more dejected than it becomes a Christian to be, John ii. 44, &c. . . .

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven, Matt. v. 3. Who is poorer in spirit than he who finds in himself no rest, no place where to lay his head? This is the divine economy, that he who feels the evil of sin, may learn to please God in newness of life; and he who hates his own habitation, a house of pollution and misery, may be invited to a house of glory, *a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. No wonder that he finds it hard to believe! Does misery make a man happy? But whoever thou art, in these circumstances, doubt not: not misery, but mercy gives bliss: but then the proper seat of mercy is misery. Thus distress of mind produces humility. Wholesome is that weakness which needs the hand of the Physician, and blessed is that self-despair, through which God himself will raise and establish the heart. Even here the converted soul shall find the pleasures to which he is called a hundred-fold greater than those which he has relinquished, as well as, in the world to come, eternal life. Expect not from us a description of their nature. The Spirit alone reveals them: they are to be known only by experience. Not crudition, but unction teaches here; not knowledge, but inward consciousness comprehends them. That the memory of past sins should remain, and the stain of them be taken away, what power can effect this? The word alone, *quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword*. 'Thy sins are forgiven.' Let the Pharisee murmur, 'Who can forgive sins, but God alone?' He, who speaks thus to me, is God. His favour blots out guilt, so that sin shall remain on the memory, but no longer, as before, discolour it. Remove damnation, fear, confusion, as they are removed by full remission; and our past sins will not only cease to hurt us, but will also work together for good, that we may devoutly thank him who has forgiven them.

ST. BERNARD.

the great deep, and invigorated the chaos or dark and confused heap of things, and caused light to shine out of that darkness, can, with the greatest ease, when he pleases, cause the light of divine consolation to arise and shine upon the dark and disconsolate soul. And this he often doth. I may here appeal to the *experience* of many good Christians, who sometimes find a sudden joy coming into their minds, *enlightening* their *understandings*, dispelling all clouds from thence, warming and enlivening their affections, and enabling them to discern the graces of God shining in their brightness, and to *feel* them vigorously acting in their souls, so that they have been, after a sort, *transfigured* with their Saviour, and wished, with St. Peter, that they might always dwell on that mount Tabor.

BP. BULL.

The glorious Privileges of the meanest Christian.

LET us discover, if it be possible, the most miserable man in this assembly; let us dissipate the darkness that covers him; let us raise him from that kind of grave in which his indigence and meanness conceal him. This man, unknown to the rest of mankind; this man, who seems hardly formed by the Creator into an intelligent existence; this man hath, however, the greatest and most glorious privileges. This man, being reconciled to God by religion, hath a right to aspire to the most noble and sublime objects of it. He hath a right to elevate his soul to God in ardent prayer, and, without the hazard of being taxed with vanity, he may assure himself, that God, the great God, encircled in glory, and surrounded with the praises of the blessed, will behold him, hear his prayer, and grant his request. This man hath a right to say to himself, The attention, that the Lord of nature gives to the government of the universe, to the wants of mankind, to the innumerable company of angels, and to his own felicity, doth not prevent this adorable being from attending to me; from occupying himself about my person, my children, my family, my house, my health, my substance, my salvation, my most minute concern, even a single *hair of my head*, Luke xxi. 18. This man hath a right of addressing God by names the most tender and mild, yea, if I may venture to speak so, by those most familiar names, which equals give each other; he

The Spirit of God, which in the first beginning of things moved upon the face of

may call him his God, his master, his father, his friend. Believers have addressed God by each of these names, and God hath not only permitted them to do so, he hath even expressed his approbation of their taking these names in their mouths. This man hath a right of coming to eat with God at the Lord's table, and to live, if I may be allowed to speak so, to live with God, as a man lives with his friend. This man hath a right to apply to himself whatever is most great, most comfortable, most ecstatic in the mysteries of redemption, and to say to himself: For me the Divine intelligence revolved the plan of redemption; for me the Son of God was appointed before the foundation of the world to be a propitiatory sacrifice; for me in the fulness of time he took mortal flesh; for me he lived several years among men in this world; for me he pledged himself to the justice of his Father, and suffered such unparalleled punishment, as confounds reason and surpasses imagination; for me the Holy Spirit shook the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land, Hag. ii. 6. and established a ministry, which he confirmed by healing the sick, by raising the dead, by casting out devils, and by subverting the whole order of nature. This man hath a right to aspire to the felicity of the immortal God, to the glory of the immortal God, to the throne of the immortal God. Arrived at the fatal hour, lying on his dying bed, reduced to the sight of useless friends, ineffectual remedies, unavailing tears, he hath a right to triumph over death, and to defy his disturbing, in the smallest degree, the tranquil calm that his soul enjoys; he hath a right to summon the gates of heaven to admit his soul, and to say to them, *Lift up your heads; O ye gates! even lift them up, ye everlasting doors!*

SAURIN.

Motives for Christian Cheerfulness.

SUCH are the obligations to cultivate a cheerful disposition which affect us as men, wishing to possess a sound mind in a healthful body; to taste the beauties and excellencies of the world in which we are placed; and to make a due return of gratitude and thankfulness to God, who placed us in it. Let us now consider the additional motives afforded us, as Christians, by the religion we profess.

The nature of that religion is sufficiently

expressed by the term so often used to denote it. It is a communication of good news, which should be received, in this case, as in all others, with a joy proportionable to its importance; and as it is of the highest importance, should be therefore productive of the greatest joy. The patriarchs and prophets, who viewed afar off that wonderful event which hath since taken place, were affected by it in a very sensible and lively manner. *Your father Abraham*, says our Lord to the Jews, *rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.* Isaiah is in raptures whenever he has occasion to touch upon the subject. *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!—Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people. Sing, O heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.* When the predictions were accomplished, and the Divine Person who had been the subject of them made his appearance in the flesh, the heavenly messenger published the news in the following terms—*Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.* The Gospel was accordingly received by the first converts, on the day of Pentecost, *with gladness and singleness of heart.* Into whatsoever city or country it came, *there was great joy in that place;* and the joy, we find, was such that it raised its possessors above the world, and triumphed over all afflictions. Of other things they were often despoiled; but *their joy no man took from them.* In every situation and condition, they did then what the Apostle exhorts all Christians to do, they *rejoiced evermore.*

Nor can we wonder that the Gospel should, in its name and nature, portend joy, when we reflect that its end was to deliver mankind from sorrow. Sorrow first entered into the world, as a necessary attendant on sin, which filled the minds of men with disquietude and anxiety, their bodies with diseases and pains. The Gospel removes the former by the pardon it holds forth, and enables us cheerfully to bear the latter by the grace it confers; God therefore represents himself in it, as *the God of love, and of all consolation.*

Our Lord calls us to him, that he may *give us rest and refreshment*; that he may *wipe all tears from our eyes*; that we may *enter into our Master's joy*; and that *our joy may be full*. For this purpose he has sent us a blessed *Comforter, to abide with us for ever*, whose first fruits are *love, joy, and peace*; a Spirit, cheerful in himself, and making those cheerful who are partakers of him; cheerful in trouble, cheerful out of trouble; cheerful while they live, cheerful when they die; cheerful in using well the blessings of this life, cheerful in expecting the blessedness of the next; cheerful through faith, while they believe in the great and precious promises made to them; cheerful through hope, which depends upon their accomplishment; cheerful through charity, in doing acts of mercy and loving kindness; till they come to that land of plenty, where none shall want; to those regions of joy, from whence sorrow shall be for ever excluded.

BP. HORNE.

The Christian's Joy in Meditating on the Cross of Christ.

It indeed may yield great joy and sprightly consolation to us, to contemplate our Lord upon the cross, exercising his immense charity toward us, transacting all the work of our redemption, defeating all the enemies, and evacuating all the obstacles, of our salvation.

May we not delectably consider him as there stretching forth his arms of kindness, with them to embrace the world, and to receive all mankind under the wings of his protection? as there spreading out his hands, with them earnestly inviting and entreating us to accept the overtures of grace, procured by him for us?

Is it not sweet and satisfactory, to view our great High Priest on that high altar, offering up his own pure flesh, and pouring out his precious blood as a universal complete sacrifice, propitiatory for the sins of mankind?

Is it not a goodly object to behold humility and patience so gloriously rearing themselves above all worldly, all infernal pride and insolence; by the cross ascending unto the celestial throne of dignity and majesty superlative?

Is it not pleasant to contemplate our Lord there, standing erect, not only as a resolute sufferer, but as a noble conqueror,

where, *having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a solemn shew, triumphing over them*? Did ever any conqueror, loftily seated in his triumphal chariot, yield a spectacle so gallant and magnificent? Was ever tree adorned with trophies so pompous and splendid?

To the exterior view and carnal sense of men, our Lord was then indeed exposed to scorn and shame; but to spiritual and sincere discerning, all his and our enemies did there hang up as objects of contempt, utterly overthrown and undone.

There the devil, that *strong* and sturdy *one*, did hang up bound in chains, disarmed and rifled, quite baffled and confounded, mankind being rescued from his tyrannic power.

There the world, with its vain pomps, its counterfeit beauties, its bewitching pleasures, its fondly admired excellencies, did hang up all defaced and disparaged; as it appeared to St. Paul: for *God*, saith he, *forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world*.

There, in a most lively representation, and most admirable pattern, was exhibited, *the mortification of our flesh, with its affections and lusts*; and our *old man was crucified, that the body of sin might be destroyed*.

There our sins being, as St. Peter telleth us, *carried up by him unto the gibbet*, did hang as marks of his victorious prowess, as malefactors by him *condemned in the flesh*, as objects of our horror and hatred.

There death itself hung gasping, with its sting pulled out, and all its terrors quelled; his death having prevented ours, and induced immortality.

There all wrath, enmity, strife, (the banes of comfortable life,) did hang *abolished in his flesh, and slain upon the cross, by the blood whereof he made peace, and reconciled all things in heaven and earth*.

There manifold yokes of bondage, instruments of vexation, and principles of variance, even all *the handwriting of ordinances, that was against us*, did hang up *cancelled and nailed to the cross*.

So much sweet comfort by special consideration may be extracted from this event, which in appearance was most doleful, but in effect the most happy that ever by Providence was dispensed to the world.

DR. BARROW.

The Christian's Joy in Meditating on the Divinity of Christ.

I ASSURE you, in the most solemn manner, that I entertain this moment the fullest conviction that the Bible contains a true record of the revelations of God: more especially, I believe in the supreme divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. Him I regard daily with renewed satisfaction and joy, as the immediate object of religious worship. Him I revere as the utmost perfection which human nature can exhibit, and as the express image of the Godhead. I believe, with increasing intuitive knowledge, *that no man can come unto the Father, but by and through him.* I believe, that, through his person and mediation only, the human race can be conducted to its proper destination, restored to its original dignity, and attain to the complete purpose of eternal love. It is he on whom I am daily more and more constrained to place an entire dependence. As a mortal man, as a helpless sinner, as a philosopher, I stand in need of him. The more I examine all the different systems of philosophy, the more I am led to adore Jesus Christ as my Lord and my God. Christ, or despair, is my only alternative. His incarnation, his sufferings, death, and resurrection, his close affinity to mankind, serve to dispel all my darkness, to supply all my defects. LAVATER.

The Glorifying in the Cross of Christ.

THE willing susception, and the cheerful sustenance of the cross, is indeed the express condition, and the peculiar character of our Christianity; in signification whereof, it hath been from most ancient times a constant usage, to mark those who enter into it with the figure of it. The cross, as the instrument by which our peace with God was wrought, as the stage whereon our Lord did act the last part of his marvellous obedience, consummating our redemption, as the field wherein the captain of our salvation did achieve his noble victories, and erect his glorious trophies over all the enemies thereof, was well assumed to be the badge of our profession, the ensign of our spiritual warfare, the pledge of our constant adherence to our crucified Saviour; in relation to whom our chief hope is grounded, our great joy and sole

glory doth consist: for *God forbid, saith St. Paul, that I should glory save in the cross of Christ.*

Let it be *to the Jews a scandal*, or offensive to their fancy, prepossessed with expectations of a Messias flourishing in secular pomp and prosperity; let it be *folly to the Greeks*, or seem absurd to men puffed up and corrupted in mind with fleshly notions and maxims of worldly craft, disposing them to value nothing which is not grateful to present sense or fancy, that God should put his own most beloved Son into so very sad and despicable a condition; that salvation from death and misery should be procured by so miserable a death; that eternal joy, glory, and happiness should issue from these fountains of sorrow and shame; that a person in external semblance devoted to so opprobrious usage, should be the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, the king and judge of all the world; let, I say, this doctrine be scandalous and distasteful to some persons tainted with prejudice; let it be strange and incredible to others blinded with self-conceit; let all the inconsiderate, all the proud, all the profane part of mankind, openly with their mouth, or closely in heart, slight and reject it: yet to us it must appear grateful and joyous; to us it is a faithful and most credible *proposition worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*, in this way, of suffering for them. To us, who discern by a clearer light, and are endowed with a purer sense, kindled by the divine Spirit, from whence we may with comfortable satisfaction of mind apprehend and taste that God could not, in a higher measure, or fitter manner, illustrate his glorious attributes of goodness and justice, his infinite grace and mercy toward his poor creatures, his holy displeasure against wickedness, his impartial severity in punishing iniquity and impiety, or in vindicating his own sacred honour and authority, than by thus ordering his only Son, clothed with our nature, to suffer for us; that also true virtue and goodness could not otherwise be taught, be exemplified, be commended and impressed with greater advantage.

Since thereby, indeed, a charity and humanity so unparalleled, far transcending theirs who have been celebrated for devoting their lives out of love to their coun-

try, or kindness to their friends, a meekness so incomparable, a resolution so invincible, a patience so heroical, were manifested for the instruction and direction of men; since never were the vices and the vanities of the world, so prejudicial to the welfare of mankind, so remarkably discountenanced; since never any suffering could pretend to so worthy and beneficial effects, the expiation of the whole world's sins, and reconciliation of mankind to God, the which no other performance, no other sacrifice did ever aim to procure; since, in fine, no virtue had ever so glorious rewards as sovereign dignity to him that exercised it, and eternal happiness to those that imitate it; since, I say, there be such excellent uses and fruits of the cross borne by our Saviour; we can have no reason to be offended at it, or ashamed of it; but with all reason heartily should approve, and humbly adore the deep wisdom of God, together with all other his glorious attributes displayed therein. To whom therefore, as is most due, let us devoutly render all glory and praise. And,

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.

DR. BARROW.

The Believer's Application to Christ in all relations of Life.

LABOUR ever to get Christ into your ship; he will check every tempest, and calm every vexation that grows upon thee. When thou shalt consider that his truth, and person, and honour is embarked in the same vessel with thee, thou mayest safely resolve on one of these—either he will be my pilot in the ship, or my plank in the sea to carry me safe to land. If I suffer in his company, and as his member, he suffers with me; and then I may triumph to be made any way conformable unto Christ my Head. If I have Christ with me, there can no estate come, which can be cumbersome unto me. Have I a load of misery and infirmity, inward, outward, in mind, body, name, or estate? This takes away the vexation of all, when I consider it all comes from Christ, and it

all runs into Christ. It all comes from him as the wise disposer of his own body; and it all runs into him as the compassionate sharer with his own body. It all comes from him, who is the distributor of his Father's gifts; and it all runs into him who is the partaker of his members' sorrows. If I am weak in body, Christ my Head was wounded; if weak in mind, Christ my Head was heavy unto death. If I suffer in my estate, Christ my Head became poor, as poor as a servant, 2 Cor. viii. 9. Phil. ii. 7; if in my name, Christ my Head was esteemed vile, as vile as Beelzebub, Matt. xii. 24. Paul was comforted in the greatest tempest with the presence of an angel; how much more with the grace of Christ! When the thorn was in his flesh, and the buffets of Satan about his soul, yet then was his presence a plentiful protection; *My grace is sufficient for thee*: and he confesseth it elsewhere, *I am able to do all things through Christ that strengthens me*. Christ's head hath sanctified any thorns; his back, any furrows; his hands, any nails; his side, any spear; his heart, any sorrow that can come to mine. Again;—have I a great estate? am I loaden with abundance of earthly things? This takes away all the vexation, that I have Christ with me; his promise to sanctify it, his wisdom to manage it, his glory to be by it advanced, his word to be by it maintained, his appointed ones to be by it supplied, his Church to be by it repaired; in one word, his poverty to be by it relieved. For as Christ hath strength and compassion to take off the burden of our afflictions; so hath he poverty too, to ease that vexation which may grow from our abundance. If thou hadst a whole wardrobe of cast apparel, Christ hath more nakedness than all that can cover; if whole barns full of corn and cellars of wine, Christ hath more empty bowels, than all that can fill; if all the precious drugs in a country, Christ hath more sickness than all that can cure; if the power of a great prince, Christ hath more imprisonment than all that can enlarge; if a whole house full of silver and gold, Christ hath more distressed members to be comforted, more breaches in his Church to be repaired, more enemies of his Gospel to be opposed, more defenders of his faith to be supplied, more urgencies of his kingdom to be attended, than all that will serve for. Christ professeth him-

self to be still hungry, naked, sick and in prison, and to stand in need of our visits and supplies, Matt. xxv. 35—40. As all the good which Christ hath done, is ours, by reason of our communion with him; so all the evil we suffer, is Christ's, by reason of his compassion with us. The Apostle saith, that we *sit together with Christ in heavenly places*; and the same Apostle saith, that *the sufferings of Christ are made up in his members*, Eph. ii. 6. Col. i. 24. 'Nos ibi sedemus, et ille hic laborat;' we are glorified in him, and he pained in us. In all his honour we are honoured; and in all our affliction he is afflicted.

BP. REYNOLDS.

The Believer's Comfort and Security from Christ, being the Keeper of all his Concerns.

BUT he who is the Redeemer of the soul will surely not neglect the lesser interests of his people. If he so loved them as to give himself for them to redeem them unto God, how shall he not give them all things which his wisdom sees best for them? Hence he is represented,

As *the Keeper of all their concerns* in this world of uncertainty and of sin.—It is a consideration the most animating to the faith of the believer, that all power is committed into his hands, that he may give eternal life to his people; that exalted upon the throne in the nature of his brethren, he is the Head over all things for his Church. Not only are their individual concerns in his hand, but the whole world; its events, both great and small, are regulated by his wisdom as in suberviency to their God. *His eyes run to and fro throughout all the earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of those that fear him.* His attention to their common concerns is beautifully expressed by the Psalmist;—*Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night: the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. Jehovah shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore*, Psal. cxxi. 5—8. While he hath the management of all things in providence, it might naturally be expected that the objects of his everlasting love, the redeemed with his blood, the subjects of his spiritual grace, who are partakers of his Spirit, should not be neglected in his government,

but obtain his peculiar attention: they might naturally expect that he who clothes the lilies, would much more clothe them; that he who feeds the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, would much more provide for his children; that if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, nor a hair from the head, without the observation of the great Governor of all, their minutest concerns cannot be beneath his regard any more than the greatest beyond the limit of his infinite mind. With these views they might most reasonably quiet every anxious solicitude, and leave their concerns with him, Matt. vi. 25—34; and x. 29, 39. But his faithful promises secure to them the particular regards of his providential care: his promises, indeed, are so great and extensive, that, if they were to be literally understood, we must suppose that no affliction or distress could ever rest upon his people. This, however, we know is not the case: this he has declared will not be the case in the present state, and yet his promise ensures them that no evil shall befall them, no plague come nigh their dwelling: they need not be afraid for the terror by night, nor the arrow that flieth by day, nor the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day; when a thousand fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand, it shall not come nigh them. (See that beautiful charter of Christian privileges in Psal. xci; and that delightful series of promises of help under, and deliverance from, all in Psal. xxxiv.)

But though these promises do not secure the deliverance of his people from all that we call evil, they must secure them from what *he* sees to be evil, and that all which he sends he will turn into a blessing. His wisdom, his knowledge, and his power, guided by his love, are ever employed in the direction of their concerns. His eye is ever upon them, and his ears attentive unto their prayers. Their business, their friends, their circumstances, their estate and persons, yea every event which shall happen to them, is under his especial superintendence, and guided by his sovereign pleasure. What an encouraging view is this in the present state of things! Faith may well satisfy the believer, and reconcile his mind to all the events of life. He need not be afraid of evil tidings, when his heart is steadfast trusting in the Lord. If all events are the appointment of his

providence, they cannot be wrong under such direction; and if ever they appear dark and inexplicable to us, this must arise from the weakness of our mind, the partial view which we take of his ways, and our consequent ignorance of his present and ultimate design. In the mysterious dispensations of his providence the people of his love may be both poor and afflicted, the redeemed with his blood and the heirs of his kingdom may be tried in the furnace of affliction, and harassed by the temptations of the enemy: but, since none of these things can take place without his appointment, it is most reasonable to conclude that there is a necessity for all, and a gracious design in all; while his promise assures them that *all things shall work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose*. How highly unreasonable and absurd is it to wish to take the management of the minutest concern out of his hand! Yet this is the language and tendency of our unbelieving fears, and the secret murmuring of dissatisfaction. Are they not, O believer, in the hands of him who loveth thee with an everlasting love; who chose thee for himself; who gave himself for thee, even to the death upon the cross; who is still thy Friend above; who hath called thee by his grace, and hath promised thee his kingdom? Why, then, should you doubt his goodness or his love, any more than his wisdom and his power? Surely he is worthy of our confidence: such views as these call for our faith and quiet dependence: and in thus resting upon him is the happiness of the Christian life, John xiv. 1, &c.; Phil. iv. 6, 7.

Let us, then, glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in this delightful character, and in the fulfilment of this covenant office. Let us recollect, that he who is the Keeper of Israel keepeth all the Israel of God by the power of God, that we may glorify him in the only way in which we can glorify him, by giving up our bodies and souls, ourselves and ours, and all our concerns absolutely to his keeping. Here, then, the believer may cheerfully exult, and say, All my concerns are safe; why then, what then, should I fear? Nothing can escape his knowledge, nothing can evade his wisdom, nothing can prevent his love, nothing can be beyond his power. I may go in and out, lie down and rise up in safety, for Jesus is my guard. I fight against my

sins, corruptions, temptations, and enemies, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my faith. I triumph in the confidence of faith, that all things are mine, for my sake, and for my salvation, since I have surrendered myself to Christ, since he hath given himself to me, *since I am Christ's and Christ's is God's*, 1 Cor. iii. 23.

REV. W. GOODE.

The Christian's Comfort from the Promises in every circumstance.

THE promises are exceeding great and precious, in every point of view; whether we consider the greatness and variety of the blessings contained in them; the manner in which they are expressed by the great and condescending God; the certainty of their fulfilment to all true believers; and the happy effects and consequences of them in the souls of all real Christians in the world.

Every day we want a promise of an interest in a covenant God, to give us his love, his vital presence, his powerful protection, and bountiful supply of all our wants: such a promise we have in Heb. viii. 10. *I will be to them a God*. Every day I want a heart to know God: such a promise we have in Jer. xxiv. 7. *I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Jehovah;—and they shall return to me with their whole heart*. Every day I want a promise that I shall be enabled to love God: such a promise there is in Deut. xxx. 6. *I will circumcise thine heart to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live*. Every day I want a promise of the pardon of all my sins: such a promise there is in Psa. cxxx. 4. *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*. . . . Every day I want a promise of justification by the righteousness of Christ: such a promise there is in 1 Cor. i. 30. *Of God he is made unto us righteousness.—We are made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. Every day I want a promise of a new heart: such a promise there is in Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will take away the heart of stone, (i. e. a stubborn will,) and give you a heart of flesh, i. e. a soft, sensible, warm heart towards God and all heavenly objects*. Note, A new heart implies new apprehensions of the illustrious power and grace

of Christ, his fitness to save, his fulness to satisfy our wishes, and his beauty to endear himself to our souls. It also implies new determinations of the will and choice towards Christ our wisdom, as a prophet to remove our ignorance: our righteousness and redemption, as a priest to remove our guilt and slavery: sanctification, as our king to subdue our stubbornness, remove our rebellion, and restore the lost image of God's holiness to our souls. Every day I want a promise of victory over sin, and a power over the vile inclinations, the polluted passions, and vicious tastes of my soul: such a promise there is in Micah vii. 19. *He will subdue our iniquities.—Sin shall not have dominion over you*, Rom. vi. 14. *Ye, through the Spirit, shall mortify*, i. e. suppress and weaken, *the deeds*, i. e. the impure emotions, *of the body; and thus ye shall live*, Rom. viii. 13. i. e. a life of sanctification and joy. Every day I want to live above the spirit and unlawful love of the world: such a promise there is in John xvi. 33. *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.—I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me by the cross of Christ*, Gal. vi. 14. Every day I want strength against all the fraud and force of the temptations of the devil: such a promise there is in 1 Cor. x. 13. *No temptation hath taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted*, (and tried, or put to the proof,) *above that ye are able to bear; but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.—The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations*, 2 Pet. ii. 9. *The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly*, Rom. xvi. 20. *We are not ignorant of his devices*, 2 Cor. ii. 11. *Ye shall be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*, Eph. vi. 11. Every day I desire to have a promise of wisdom and prudence from God, to direct me in every step of my moral and religious conduct: such a promise there is in Jam. i. 5. *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth not*: He does not reproach us for our past foolishness, and numberless imprudences; he will not cut us to pieces with sharp words; but will give us wisdom with all the generosity of a God. Every day I want a promise of being the better for every thing

that befalls me, and of being the worse for no event which happens to me in the course of Divine Providence: such a promise there is in Rom. viii. 28. *All things work together for good to them that love God. . . .* Every day I want a promise of the supply of all temporal blessings: such promises abound all through the book of God. *Verily thou shalt be fed*, Psa. xxxvii. 3. *My God shall supply all your need*, Philip. iv. 19. *All things shall be added to you*, Matt. vi. 33. Do we want honour? * God will bring us to honour, i. e. the esteem and veneration of men, while we strenuously walk in the line of duty. *Them that honour me, I will honour; while those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed*, 1 Sam. ii. 30. *Riches and honour are with me*, Prov. viii. 18. *She*, i. e. Wisdom, *shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her*, Prov. iv. 8. *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour*, John xii. 26. Do we want riches? God will give us riches, i. e. a competent supply of food and raiment, and a satisfaction of mind with that competency: this is true riches. *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. *Ye are of more value than many sparrows*, Matt. x. 31. *If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* Matt. vi. 30. *He that spared not his own Son, will he not with him freely give us all things?* Rom. viii. 32. Do we want health and pleasure? God has promised, that the ways of Christ shall be health to our flesh and marrow to our bones; *his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace*, Prov. iii. 8—17. Do we want the strong consolations of God under all the troubles and distresses of life? such promises we have in rich abundance in Psa. xci. *I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour him.—Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me*, Psa.

* Honour is a state of distinction and dignity in the estimation of God so as to be beyond the reach of just disdain, and above the force of rational and deserved suspicion. True religious honour consists in standing in the most honourable connexions with Christ—in possessing the most worthy dispositions, like Christ—in exerting the most honourable actions and graces to the glory of Christ—and in enjoying the honourable love and approbation from the heart and language of Christ. This honour infinitely transcends all the distinctions, and titles, and empty bubbles, that monarchs and worlds can bestow upon the proud and haughty sons of men.

1. 15. *I will strengthen them in the Lord*, Zech. x. 12. Do we want sanctified afflictions, and the presence of Christ in all our sorrows? such sweet assurances of his presence we have in Isa. lxiii. 9. *In all their affliction he was afflicted, the messenger of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and bare them and carried them all the days of old. We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, Heb. iv. 15. He is a *merciful and faithful high priest*, Heb. ii. 14. It is really astonishing to observe how richly Christ has provided all possible supports under the troubles of life, and has secured to the believer the glorious sanctification of all kinds of affliction, so that all things shall work together for good. Every day we want the assistance of God in our duties, conflicts, and trials: such a promise there is in Rom. viii. 26. *The Spirit himself helpeth our infirmities*: such a promise there is in John xiv. 26. *The Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance.—I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication*, Zec. xii. 10. *Ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body*, Rom. viii. 13. Every day we want a promise of perseverance in grace: such a promise there is in John x. 28. *My sheep shall never perish.—Who shall separate us from the love of God?* Rom. viii. 35. *I will never turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me*, Jer. xxxii. 40. *This God is our God for ever and ever*, Psal. xlviii. 14. *Because I live, ye shall live also*, John xiv. 19.

DR. RYLAND.

Encouragement which the Christian derives from the love of God through Christ.

AND from hence we should learn faith and dependence on Christ in all our necessities, because we are under the protection and provision of him who careth for us, and is able to help us. A right judgment of God in Christ, and in his Gospel of salvation, will wonderfully strengthen the faith of men. Paul was not ashamed of persecutions, because he knew whom he had believed, he doubted neither of his care or power, and therefore he committed the keeping of his soul unto him against the last day, and therefore when all forsook him, he stood to the truth, *because*

the Lord forsook him not, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17, 18. The reason why men trust in themselves, or their friends, is, because they are assured of their care and goodwill to help them. But if men did compare the affections of Christ to other succours, they would rather choose to build their hopes and assurances on him. This consideration of the care and the power of God made the three children at a point against the edict of an idolatrous king, *Our God is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us*, Dan. iii. 16, 17. Heb. xi. 17-19. Rom. iv. 20, 21. And this made Abraham at a point to offer his son without staggering, because he rested upon the promise and the power of God, who was able to raise him from the dead, from whence, in a sort, he had received him before, namely from a dead body and from a barren womb. And this is the ground of all diffidence, that men consider not the power and care of God towards them, Jer. xvii. 5, 8, but conceive of him as if he had forgotten to be gracious, as if he had cast them out of his sight, as if he had given over his thoughts of them, and that maketh them fear second causes, and seek unto things which cannot profit. And therefore the Lord suffereth second causes to go cross, to fail and disappoint a man, because he loveth to be glorified by our dependence on his all-sufficiency and protection. He suffereth friends to fail, to be off and on, promises to be uncertain, assurances to vanish, projections and frames of businesses to be shattered, that men may know how to trust him; for man being impotent in himself, must needs have something without himself to subsist upon. Now when a man findeth the creatures to be deceitful, and second causes vain, and considereth that God is *I Am*, a most certain rewarder of those that diligently seek him, then the soul findeth it good to draw near to God, to live under his fidelity, and to cast all its care on him, because he careth for it.

And indeed a right judgment of God will help us to employ our faith in any condition. In wealth men are apt to trust in their abundance, to stand upon their mountain, and to say, *I shall never be moved*. But now in this estate, if a man conceive aright of God, that it is he who giveth strength to be rich, and who giveth riches strength to do us good, that he can blast the greatest estate with an imperceptible consumption, and in the midst of a man's sufficiency make him be in straits, that

he can embitter all with his sore displeasure, and not suffer the floor nor the wine-press to feed him; in great wisdom and deep counsels, if a man consider that the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and that he can turn the wisdom of oracles into foolishness, and catch the wise in their own craftiness; in great provisions of worldly strength and human combinations, if he consider that God can take off the wheels, and amaze the phantasies, and dissipate the affections, and melt the spirits, and way-lay the enterprises of the hugest hosts of men; that he can arm flies, and lice, and dust, and wind, and every small unexpected contingency against the strongest opposition; it must needs make him set his rest, and hang his confidences and assurances upon a higher principle. Again, in poverty and the extremest straits which a man can be in, if he consider that God is a God as well of the valleys as of the hills, that he will be seen in the mount, when his people are under the sword, and upon the altar; that the Lord knoweth the days of the upright, and will satisfy them in the time of famine; that when the young lions famish for hunger, yet even then he can provide abundantly for his; that when things are marvellous unto us, then they are easy unto him; that when they are impossible unto us, then they are possible with him; that he can lead in a wilderness, and feed with an unknown and an unsuspected bread; that when the light of the sun and the moon shall fail, he can be an everlasting light and glory to his people: that *as a father*, so he pitieth; and *as a heavenly Father*, so he knoweth, and can supply all our needs; that when we are without any wisdom to disappoint, or strength to withstand the confederacies of men, when they come with chariots of iron and walls of brass, even then the eyes of the Lord run to and fro to shew himself valiant in the behalf of those that walk uprightly, that he can then order some accident, produce some engine, discover some way to extricate and to clear all; then will a man learn to be careful or distracted in nothing, but *in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make his request known unto him who is at hand, and who careth for him.*

The like may be said of men's spiritual condition: when men despair, as Cain, that their sin is greater than can be forgiven, the only ground is, because they judge not aright of God in Christ, they

look not on him in his Gospel as a God that careth for them, they do not lean upon the staff of his strength. Despair is an affection growing out of the sense of sin and wrath, as it is *malum arduum, instans, et ineluctabile*, an evil too heavy to be borne, and yet impossible to be removed. All victory ariseth either out of an inward power of our own, or by the assistance of foreign power, which is more than our own. Now then when we despair because of sin, this cometh—First, from the consideration of our own everlasting disability to break through sin by our own strength, and this is a good despair, which helpeth to drive men unto Christ.

Secondly, it cometh from a misconceiving either of the power or care of those which might assist us; sometimes from the misjudging of God's power, for the forgiveness of sins is an act of Omnipotency, and therefore when the Lord proclaimeth himself a forgiver of iniquity, transgression, and sin, he introduceth it with his titles of power, *the Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful*, &c., Exod. xxxiv. 6. To pardon malefactors is a power and royalty which belongeth only unto princes. There is much strength required in bearing burdens, and therefore patience especially towards sinners, is an act of power, and impatience ever a sign of impotency; and therefore the weakest affections are ever most revengeful, children, old men, sick or indigent persons are ever most subject to anger, and least able to concoct an injury: so that to conceive sin greater than can be forgiven, is to misjudge the omnipotency of God. But ordinarily despair proceedeth from the misjudging of God's affection and good-will towards men; the soul conceives of him, as of one that hath utterly cast off all care or respect towards it. This is an error of God's benevolence, and the latitude of his mercy, and height of his thoughts towards sinners. He hath declared himself willing that all men should be saved, he hath set forth examples of the compass of his long-suffering, his invitations run in general terms, that no man may dare to preoccupate damnation, but look unto God, as one that careth for his soul. Let a man's sins be never so crimson, and his continuance therein never so obdurate, (I speak this for the prevention of despair, not for the encouragement of security or hardness,) yet as soon as he is willing to turn, God is willing to save, as soon as he hath an heart to attend, God

hath a tongue to speak salvation unto him. We see then the way to trust in Christ, is to look upon him as the *Bishop of our souls*, as the officer of our peace, as one that careth and provideth for us, as one that hath promised to save to the uttermost, to give supplies of his Spirit and grace in time of need, to give us daily bread, and life in abundance, to be with us always to the end of the world, never to fail us nor forsake us.

BP. REYNOLDS.

The Communion of Saints.

FIRST then, the saints of God living in the church of Christ, have communion with God the Father: for the Apostles did therefore write that they to whom they wrote might have communion with them (*that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us*, saith St. John,) and did at the same time declare that their *communion was with the Father*. Wherefore seeing all the saints of God under the Gospel receiving the doctrine of the Apostles have communion with them; seeing the communion of the Apostles was the communion with the Father; it followeth that all the saints of God under the Gospel have a communion with God the Father. As we are the branches of the Vine, so the Father is the Husbandman; and thus the saints partake of his care and inspection. As *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God*; so all who are heirs of the faith of Abraham are made partakers of the same relation. Nor are we only friends, but also sons; for *behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*, 1 John iii. 1. Thus must we acknowledge that the saints of God have communion with the Father, because by the great and precious promises given unto them, they *become partakers of the divine nature*.

Secondly; the saints of God living in the church of God have communion with the Son of God; for, as the Apostle said, *Our communion is with the Father and the Son*; and this connexion is infallible, because *he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son*; and our Saviour prayed for all such as should *believe on him through the word of the Apostles, that they might be one, as the Father is one in him and he in the Father, that they also may be one in*

both.—*I in them, saith Christ, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one*. This communion of the saints with the Son of God is, as most evident, so most remarkable. He hath taken unto him our nature and infirmities; he hath taken upon him our sins, and the curse due unto them; while *we all have received of his fulness, and grace for grace*; and are all called to *the fellowship of his sufferings*, that we may *be conformable to his death*. What is the fellowship of brethren and coheirs, of the bridegroom and the spouse; what is the communion of members with the head, of branches with the vine, that is the communion of saints with Christ. For God *hath called us unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*.

Thirdly; the saints of God in the church of Christ have communion with the Holy Ghost: and the Apostle hath two ways assured us of the truth thereof, one rhetorically, by a seeming doubt, *If there be any fellowship of the Spirit*; the other devoutly praying for it, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all*. The saints are therefore such, because they partake of the Holy Ghost; for they are therefore holy because they are sanctified, and it is the Spirit alone that sanctifieth. Beside, the communion with the Father and the Son is wrought by the communication of the Spirit; for hereby do we become the sons of God, in that *we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*; and thereby do we become coheirs with Christ, in that *because we are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father*; so that *we are no more servants, but sons; and if sons, then heirs of God through Christ*. This is the communion which the saints enjoy with the three Persons of the blessed Trinity; this is the heavenly fellowship represented unto entertaining Abraham, when *the Lord appeared unto him, and three men stood by him*: for our Saviour hath made us this most precious promise, *If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*, John xiv. 23. Here is the soul of man made the habitation of God the Father, and of God the Son; and the presence of the Spirit cannot be wanting where those two are inhabiting; for, *if any*

man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9. The Spirit therefore with the Father and the Son inhabiteth in the saints; for *Know ye not*, saith the Apostle, *that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* 1 Cor. iii. 16.

Fourthly; the saints of God in the church of Christ have communion with the holy angels. They who did foretel the birth of John the forerunner of Christ, they who did annunciate unto the blessed Virgin the conception of the Saviour of the world, they who sung a glorious hymn at the nativity of the Son of God, they who carried the soul of Lazarus into Abraham's bosom, they who appeared unto Christ from heaven in his agony to strengthen him, they who opened the prison-doors and brought the Apostles forth, they who at the end of the world shall sever the wicked from among the just, and gather together the elect of God, certainly they have a constant and perpetual relation to the children of God. Nay, *are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?* Heb. i. 14. They have a particular sense of our condition, for Christ hath assured us that *there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth*. And upon this relation, the angels, who are all the angels (that is, the messengers), of God, are yet called the angels of men, according to the admonition of Christ, *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven*, Matt. xviii. 10. . .

Again; the saints of God living in the church of Christ, have communion with all the saints living in the same church. *If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another*; we all have benefit of the same ordinances, all partake of the same promises, we all are endued with the graces of the same Spirit, all united with the same mutual love and affection, *keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*; all engrafted into the same stock, and so receiving life from the same root; all *holding the same head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*, Col. ii. 19. For in the philosophy of the Apostle, the nerves are not only the instruments of motion and sensation, but

of nutrition also; so that every member receiveth nourishment by their intervention from the head; and seeing the head of the body is Christ, and all the saints are members of that body, they all partake of the same nourishment, and so have all communion among themselves.

Lastly, the saints of God living in the church of Christ, are in communion with all the saints departed out of this life and admitted to the presence of God. Jerusalem sometimes is taken for the church on earth, sometimes for that part of the church which is in Heaven, to show that as both are represented by one, so both are but one city of God. Wherefore thus doth the Apostle speak to such as are called to the Christian faith, *Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant*, Heb. xii. 22. Indeed the communion of the saints in the church of Christ with those who are departed is demonstrated by their communion with the saints alive; for if I have communion with a saint of God, as such, while he liveth here, I must still have communion with him when he is departed hence; because the foundation of that communion cannot be removed by death. The mystical union between Christ and his church, the spiritual conjunction of the members to the Head, is the true foundation of that communion which one member hath with another, all the members living and increasing by the same influence which they receive from him. But death, which is nothing else but the separation of the soul from the body, maketh no separation in the mystical union, no breach of the spiritual conjunction; and consequently there must continue the same communion, because there remaineth the same foundation. Indeed, the saint departed before his death had some communion with the hypocrite, as hearing the word, professing the faith, receiving the sacraments together; which being in things only external, as they were common to them both, and all such external actions ceasing in the person dead, the hypocrite remaining loseth all communion with the saint departing, and the saints surviving cease to have farther fellowship with the hypocrite

dying. But seeing the true and unfeigned holiness of man wrought by the powerful influence of the Spirit of God, not only remaineth, but also is improved after death; seeing the correspondence of the internal holiness was the true communion between their persons in their life, they cannot be said to be divided by death, which had no power over that sanctity by which they were first conjoined.

This communion of the saints in heaven and earth, upon the mystical union of Christ their head, being fundamental and internal, what acts or external operations it produceth is not so certain. That we communicate with them in hope of that happiness which they actually enjoy, is evident; that we have the Spirit of God given us as an earnest, and so a part of their felicity, is certain. But what they do in heaven in relation to us on earth, particularly considered, or what we ought to perform in reference to them in heaven, beside a reverential respect and study of imitation, is not revealed unto us in the Scriptures, nor can be concluded by necessary deduction from any principles of Christianity. They who first found this part of the article in the Creed, and delivered their exposition unto us, have made no greater enlargement of this communion, as to the saints of heaven, than the society of hope, esteem, and imitation on our side; of desires and supplications on their side: and what is now taught by the church of Rome is as unwarrantable so a novitious interpretation.

The necessity of the belief of this *communion of saints* appeareth,—First, in that it is proper to excite and encourage us to holiness of life. *If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another*, 1 John i. 6. But *if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?* 2 Cor. vi. 14. When Christ sent St. Paul to the Gentiles, it was *to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ*, Acts xxvi. 18. Except we be turned from darkness, except we be taken out of the power of Satan, which is the dominion of

sin, we cannot receive the inheritance among them who are sanctified, we cannot be thought *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*. Indeed there can be no communion where there is no similitude, no fellowship with God without some sanctity; because his nature is infinitely holy, and his actions are not subject to the least iniquity.

Secondly; the belief of the communion of saints is necessary to stir us up to a proportionate gratitude unto God, and a humble and cheerful acknowledgment of so great a benefit. We cannot but acknowledge that they are *exceeding great and precious promises*, by which we become *partakers of the divine nature*.—*Who am I?* said David, *and what is my life, that I should be son-in-law to the king?* 1 Sam. xviii. 18. What are the sons of men, what are they who are called to be saints, that they should have fellowship with God the Father? St. Philip the Apostle said unto our Saviour, *Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth*; whereas he hath not only shewn us, but come unto us with the Father, and dwelt within us by his Holy Spirit; he hath called us to the fellowship of the angels and archangels, of the cherubim and seraphim, to the glorious company of the Apostles, to the goodly fellowship of the prophets, to the noble army of martyrs, to the holy church militant on earth, and triumphant in heaven.

BP. PEARSON.

Man naturally loves honour and dignity; and indeed ambition to be great, if it were directed to right objects, would, instead of being a vice, be a cardinal virtue. Man is naturally a sociable, as well as an aspiring creature: these joint inclinations make men love to be incorporated in societies that have dignity annexed to them. The subject we are treating contains all the attractives that can reasonably affect one that loves society; it is made up of the choice of all other societies, contains all the true heroes that ever were, and comprehends the flower of the universe. The meanest member is promoted at the same time to a near relation to the infinite Creator, and to all the best of his creatures: allied to the spirits made perfect in Heaven, (Heb. xii. 23,) and to the excellent ones of the earth (Psal. xvi. 3.); he can claim kindred to the patriarchs, and prophets, and martyrs, and apostles, and all the other ex

cellent persons, who adorned this world, *and of whom it was not worthy*, (Heb. xi. 38.) though they be in Heaven and he on earth, one Spirit animates them both. Surely it is industrious stupidity, if one contemplate such a society, without being enamoured with it; and all other society, or solitude, is only so far valuable as it is subservient to it: a society headed by infinite perfection, cemented by eternal love, adorned with undecaying grace, supplied out of all-sufficient bliss, entitled to the inheritance of all things, (Rev. xxi. 7.) and guarded by Omnipotence: a society as ancient as the world, but more durable; and to whose interest the world and all that is in it are subservient: a society joined together by the strictest bands, where there is no interfering of interests but one common interest, and where at last there will be no opposition of tempers or sentiments; when its members, now many of them scattered far and near, but still united to their head, shall one day have a glad universal meeting in an eternal temple never to part, and where they shall celebrate a jubilee of inconceivable ecstacy and transport, without mixture, without interruption, and, which crowns all, without end.

MACLAURIN.

The Christian's Consolation.

THE God of power and faithfulness says of his church, says of his people, *I the Lord keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it: I will preserve it night and day*, Isa. xxvii. 3. May this promise be our shield! be fulfilled to us evermore. And let us go on to lay up these precious pledges of heaven in our memory, and enrich our heart from them, by frequent meditation. They are the seed of faith. By these we are to be *made partakers of the divine nature*. *Partakers of the divine nature!* volumes cannot explain what is comprised in those few words. May we know what they mean by happy, happy experience! . . .

When the blast of sickness smites, and our strength becomes labour and sorrow; how miserable must be our condition, without an interest, and established interest in the all-glorious Redeemer!

Why do you cherish distrustful thoughts of the blessed God? Is he not boundless goodness? Is not his goodness greater than the heavens? Does not his mercy, that lovely attribute, endure for ever? All the kindness of the most endeared rela-

tions, compared with the tender compassions of a God in Christ, are no better than cruelty itself. Read the last chapter of Hosea. *Hide it within your heart*. Turn it into prayer to the King of heaven; and I hope it will be to your soul, as the dawning-day after a darksome night.

REV. J. HERVEY.

The consolations of the world are not worthy of the name; call them mirth, gaiety, or pleasure, those senseless and intoxicating things. Alas! these are far from that calm delight and satisfaction which deserves the name. Consolation is of a sober nature; it will bear consideration, reflection, and trial; it is peculiarly adapted to the day of trial, when all earthly delights retire, confess their insufficiency, and would willingly be forgotten, lest they should add affliction to the afflicted. How much, then, to be pitied is the ignorance of mankind, in lightly esteeming the only source of true felicity! Man needs consolation in a variety of situations, and seeks it in a variety of ways; but while forsaking the Fountain of living waters for the broken cisterns of earthly gratification, he constantly fails of its attainment. Well might it be asked of many, in the eager pursuit of worldly objects, *Are the consolations of God small with thee*, while, slighting the directions of his word, and the discoveries of his grace, you are *feeding on ashes*, or wearying yourselves with very vanity! How often, also, has the believer to reproach himself for the power of unbelief, and the infatuations of a mind deceived by the delusive stratagems of sin and Satan, which have drawn his heart aside from real joys, to lying vanities! While living in the strength of his privileges, and in the maintenance of his true character, let sorrows come, let afflictions seize the mortal frame, let tribulation and trouble assail the spirit, in Christ the believer has yet a source of consolation, of abounding consolation, of *everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace*, 2 Thess. ii. 16.

To have a *right* to this consolation, we must indeed be in Christ; it belongs to his office as head of the Church, and it flows from him to all his believing people, by that union wherein they are one with him, and whereby they dwell in him, and he in them, by the in-dwelling of his Spirit. No sinner can be entitled to any blessing as in himself, but only as viewed in Christ, but

when one with Christ, and Christ with him, the fulness of the Redeemer is also his. . . .

As we value, then, the consolations of Christ, let us carefully avoid that which naturally and necessarily leads from him. Though nothing shall eternally separate his people from him, there are many things which at present may cause his face to be hid from them; and indulged iniquity will always have this dreadful effect. Spiritual consolation is most delicate in its nature; it is wounded and interrupted by every folly and indulged corruption. Without walking close with God, no communion can be maintained with him. Let us, then, fear sin as we love the consolations of the Saviour. . . .

Right thoughts of Christ are essentially necessary for the present peace and comfort of the believer in his daily walk and warfare. Many a sincere and humble-minded Christian, for want of distinct views of the person, offices, and grace of the Redeemer, goes mourning from day to day, who might otherwise rejoice in the Lord, and triumph in the God of his salvation. Clear views of this adorable Person, the work which he has performed, the covenant characters which he sustains, and the blessings he bestows, together with the gracious way in which he bestows them, form the surest antidote against legal and unbelieving fears. These often destroy the comfort of the sincerest believer, darken his evidences, and distress his soul. In proportion only as Christ is apprehended by faith, these fears give way and yield to the certainty of Scriptural hope and joy. When convinced of the fulness of his atonement, the everlasting sufficiency of his righteousness, the freeness and riches of his grace, the unchangeableness of his love, and the faithfulness of his care, the humble believer learns to rest on him in peaceful satisfaction. Amidst daily infirmities he rejoices in the confidence of daily pardon; finds renewed peace with God; and maintains an assured hope of future blessings—*a hope which shall never make ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost.* In the stability of his dependence he feels secure; and, though weak in himself, is *strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.* When ready to sink under a sense of insufficiency for the trials and duties of life, the all-sufficiency of the Lord, who is his *righteousness and strength*, revives

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and consoles his spirit. These views alone can preserve peace in the conscience, or holy serenity in the soul. When, indeed, the believer is engaged in the spiritual conflict, the power of his enemies and the burden of his sins may be more felt than they were before, while under their absolute controul and domineering power,—as the man who is striving against the tide feels more of its influence than he who glides gently down with its current,—but, still, the same source of grace and spiritual aid is open, while fighting the good fight of faith; and, as daily need drives him continually to the Saviour, for his blood to cleanse, and his Spirit and grace to subdue his corruptions, here he finds the mercy and the grace all-sufficient in every time of error.

REV. W. GOODE.

The Wonderful Union of Christ's People.

THE fellowship which we have with Jesus Christ, is the most perfect and the most admirable of all unions that exist, either in nature, or in the society of men. It has this also in common with other unions, that it combines the subjects of it not with him only, but also with one another, cementing them so closely together, that, since they are joined unto him, they are all together but one and the same body, separated in this respect from all others, united and knit together most closely within themselves. When you take a nearer view of this congregation, you will discover, that there never was an assemblage, either in the world, or among the people of God; consisting of individuals so different and contrary to each other, as those whom Jesus Christ has called together to form his church; nor is there any society, whose connexion is so intimate, firm, and indissoluble, as that of the different subjects, whom he has put under his sceptre.

He has ranged under his laws, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, learned and unlearned, wild idolaters, proud philosophers, civilized and savage nations, in short, people of every climate, of all professions, manners, and inclinations, of every age and sex; tractable and incorrigible, chaste and debauched, virtuous and profligate. The oracles of God had foretold this under the most magnificent emblems: *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, &c.* This extraordinary prophecy

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has never been fulfilled but by Jesus, who has assembled in the bosom of his church, in the unity of his body, the most uncivilized men, the most ungovernable spirits, and the most savage dispositions. What other power, but that of our Saviour, could have ranged into one body, under the same yoke, a yoke so uneasy to the flesh, so many extravagant spirits, so many haughty tempers, the ignorant and the learned, the dull and the lively, the superstitious and the impious. This surely is no less a miracle than to make *the lion eat straw like the ox, or the leopard lie down with the kid, &c.*, Isa. xi. 6—8.

However different the members may be which constitute the church, they are but one body, being animated and governed by one and the same Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus. For he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is not of Christ. He is not a member of his body. From the fulness of this Spirit, as from a living and inexhaustible fountain, each individual receives one and the same life, one and the same blood, one and the same principle of motion. Every one considers the weal and woe of his brethren, as his own. Whatever inequality or diversity in nature there might have been among them, is done away and equalized by grace. Here the poor have plenty, and the rich lose their possessions; the foolish become wise, and the wise fools. J. DAILLE.

The Union in Heart and Mind between all Christians.

THERE doth follow a moral unity of hearts and minds between all of them; as it is said of the primitive Christians, that *the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one soul*. And this moral unity is fourfold.

1. A unity of faith, in the great and necessary doctrines of salvation, or in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, called by the Apostle, the foundation, the principles of the doctrines of Christ, form of sound words, the portion or analogy of faith, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and him crucified; the doctrine and truth, which is after godliness, the faith of the Gospel, the faith of Jesus, the mystery of godliness, the rule by which we should walk; called by the ancients, the seed of doctrines, the character of the church, the rule which is common to small and great: in one word, whatever doctrine there is, the knowledge whereof, and the assent thereto, is simply necessary to salvation;

in this, all who shall be saved, do first or last most unanimously agree. Differences there may be, and usually are, in less necessary points, which are matters '*Quæstionum, non fidei*,' as St. Austin speaks: for *we know but in part*, and are not yet come to be perfect men: and till the members have attained unto their full stature, there cannot be expected a universal consent, and harmony of judgments in all points, even among the best and most learned men; in which case, notwithstanding, we should receive one another in love and brotherly communion, because God himself receiveth those who thus differ, into his favour; but the Spirit of God doth never fail to lead all that shall be saved into all necessary truths, and to preserve them from any damnable and pernicious doctrine.

2. Unity in obedience, wherein all holy men do agree, although some may much exceed others in their progress and degrees of holiness, (as we may see by comparing the testimony given to Asa, and to Josiah,) such are repentance from dead works, without which we cannot be saved. Reliance upon Christ alone, by a sincere and unfeigned faith, for life and salvation. A true love of the Lord Jesus, and of all that are his. A sincere regard to all God's commandments, and a hatred of every false way. A desire to fear God's name, and a pressure of heart to cleave unto him, and follow him fully. Lastly, self-denial, submitting our will and reason to God's word and will. There may be great differences in the spiritual growth and degrees of holiness, between one Christian and the other; some sick, others healthy; some strong, others weak; some little children, others young men; some bruised reeds, and smoking flax, others bold as a lion. But this is, '*Obedientia parvis magnisque communis*.'

3. Unity in worship: for though different churches may have different observances in the external forms of divine service, yet in the substantials of worship, they all agree, viz.—that God is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and to be sanctified in all those that draw nigh unto him. That we are to call upon God, only in the name of Christ, as our alone Advocate and Mediator, *giving thanks to God the Father by him*. That we are not to worship creatures, who cannot know our hearts, nor answer our prayers, nor supply our wants, in whom we are not re-

quired to believe, but are to hold the Head, and to *keep ourselves from idols*.

4. Unity in ends and designs: for being brethren in the same family, and fellow-citizens with one another, and of the household of faith; the same enemies to oppose; the same interests and common salvation to look after, they consequently prosecute the same ends, and do not only *walk by the same rule*, but in so doing, do *mind the same things*, Phil. iii. 16. It is here, being in part carnal, they do too much seek, and serve themselves: but so far forth as they have the same Spirit, they are of the same mind with the Apostle, to prefer the honour of Christ, and the service of his church, above their own interest, according to what our Saviour hath taught us, *If any man come after me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple*. The glory of God, the progress of the Gospel, the advancement of Christ's kingdom, the subversion of the kingdom of Satan, the comforts and commandments of the church of Christ, are in their hearts and endeavours still to promote; as members of the natural, so they of the spiritual body, have all a care one of another; the end of the parts is the safety of the whole; they are all partakers of one spiritual nature, and all heirs of one common inheritance; and, therefore, as one principal fruit of the communion of saints, they aim at the same ends, and prosecute the same designs, joining together in all Christian services of love against their common enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

So that where the fundamentals of religion are safe, and all sides unanimously embraced, and the differences purely problematical, and such as do not at all endanger the vitals and essentials of religion, mutual meekness, tenderness, and forbearance are to be used, as amongst brethren and fellow-members. Disputes are to be managed with all calmness of spirit; without passion, animosity, exasperation, invidious consequences, or any thing tending to the violation of brotherly love. Hereby we preserve the communion of saints, when we own one another as brethren, and not as strangers: we credit the Gospel of peace, and adorn our mutual profession of the same common truth. We make way to the more clear discovery of truth, when no passion or prejudice doth dazzle our eyes, or overcloud our judgments. We stop the

mouths, prevent the insultations, and take away the advantages which the common adversary promiseth to himself, by our differences and dissensions. **BP. REYNOLDS.**

The Glory and Happiness of the Believer, though now obscured and hid to the world, shall be gloriously manifested hereafter.

IN that the Apostle saith, that at the appearance of Christ, true believers shall appear with him in glory, we may easily conclude,

That the happiness and glory of true believers shall not always be hid, but it shall one day appear even to the whole world, yea, both men and angels shall one day, namely, at the day of judgment, see the happiness and glory of true believers, and be eye-witnesses of the same: for why?—the Lord Jesus at that day shall shew himself to the sight of men and angels, in endless majesty and glory in his own person; and he shall at that day come to be glorified in his saints, and to be made marvellous in all them that believe: so speaks the Apostle in plain terms, 2 Thess. i. 10. At his coming he shall not only be infinitely glorious in his own person, but he shall also be glorified in his saints, he glorifying them, and they appearing with him in glory: therein they shall shew forth his grace, his power, and his goodness, and that to the astonishment and admiration of all that shall look upon them, even to the amazement of men and angels, Rom. viii. 19. The Apostle in saying, that *the creature*, that is, the whole frame of the world, *waiteth when the sons of God shall be revealed*, teacheth also this point, that there shall be a time of revelation, there shall come a day when the glory of God's children shall be revealed to all the world: the reason of this is plain,

Because there must be a time, when even the most wicked shall justify the goodness and mercy of God, in his dealing towards his children, and be convinced of folly in themselves: now that is not in this world. Here they look on the troubles of God's children, but see not their comforts; they behold their present condition in affliction, but discern not their happiness, and so account their life folly and madness; therefore, there must be a time when the happiness and glory of God's children shall be openly revealed, and set before the eyes of all the world, that even the most wicked may look on it, and (will they nill

they) justify the goodness of God towards his children, and be convinced of folly in themselves, and be forced to confess, and say, Oh, we fools thought their life folly and madness, but now we see they are dear in the sight of the Lord, and have their portion among his saints.

Now then let this be laid up in the hearts of all true believers, as a ground of great comfort to them; let them consider that, howsoever their beauty and glory is in this world obscured and overshadowed, and is not seen of the world, it lies hid from the world, either under affliction, or under the excellent grace of humility, which the world accounts baseness, they walking humbly before the Lord: that humility of theirs is as a cloud to hide away their glory from the eye of the world; yet, let them be patient for a time, and let them consider that it shall not always be hid, but the time will come when it shall evidently appear, and be open to the view of the whole world, yea, the time shall come that men and angels shall see it with admiration; yea, which is most sweet and comfortable to be thought on, even they that here have turned their glory into shame, as David saith, Psal. iv. 2, that is, have reproached them for their holy and religious carriage, and cast that in their teeth as a reproach, and loaded them with odious and foul names even in respect of that, the day shall come when they shall see that (which now they account their shame) crowned with glory, and shall be forced to change their note and sing a new song, yea, confessing their own folly, shall cry out, and say: We fools thought their life base and full of dishonour, and now behold their unspeakable brightness and glory. Let this be remembered as a matter of sweet comfort to all God's children, yea, let this encourage them even to be more vile, as David said, 2 Sam. vi. 22, when Michal mocked him for dancing before the ark, *I will yet be more vile than thus*, so let all God's children be more vile, that is, more low in their own eyes, and walk more humbly before the Lord, and so be more base, as the world esteems of them, and the time shall come when they shall be had in honour of those that now condemn them; yea, those that now despise them, if they repent not of that sin, at the coming of the Lord Jesus, shall see them in glory, and shall be forced to acknowledge their glory to their own everlasting shame and confusion.

REV. E. ELTON.

The dying Christian's Consolation.

No men have greater need of supporting joys, than dying men; and those joys must be fetched from our eternal joy. As heavenly delights are sweetest, when nothing earthly is joined with them; so the delights of dying Christians are oftentimes the sweetest they ever had. What a prophetic blessing had dying Isaac and Jacob for their sons! With what a heavenly song and divine benediction did Moses conclude his life! What heavenly advice and prayer had the disciples from their Lord when he was about to leave them! When Paul was ready to be offered up, what heavenly exhortation and advice did he give the Philippians, Timothy, and the Elders of Ephesus! How near to Heaven was John in Patmos, but a little before his translation thither! It is the general temper of the saints, to be then most heavenly when they are nearest Heaven. If it be thy case, Reader, to perceive thy dying time draw on, O where should thy heart now be, but with Christ! Methinks thou shouldst even behold him standing by thee, and should bespeak him as thy father, thy husband, thy physician, thy friend. Methinks thou shouldst, as it were, see the angels about thee, waiting to perform their last office to thy soul; even those angels, which disdained not to carry into Abraham's bosom the soul of Lazarus, nor will think much to conduct thee thither. Look upon thy pain and sickness, as Jacob did on Joseph's chariots, and let thy spirit revive within thee, and say, *It is enough, Christ is yet alive; because he lives, I shall live also!* John xiv. 19. Dost thou need the choicest cordials? Here are choicer than the world can afford; here are all the joys of heaven, even the vision of God, and Christ, and whatsoever the blessed here possess; these dainties are offered thee by the hand of Christ; he hath written the receipt in the promises of the Gospel; he hath prepared the ingredients in heaven; only put forth the hand of faith, and feed upon them, and rejoice, and live. The Lord saith to thee, as to Elijah, *Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee*. Though it be not long yet the way is miry; therefore obey his voice, arise and eat, and in the strength of that meat thou mayest go to the mount of God; and, like Moses, die in the mount, whither thou goest up; and say,

as Simeon, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for my eye of faith hath seen thy salvation*, Luke ii. 29, 30. BAXTER.

Divine Support in the hour of death from the Atonement of Christ.

THE atonement of Christ is a Divine support in the agonies of death. At such a season a thousand past iniquities will sometimes crowd in upon the memory, and will fill the soul with horror, and perhaps Satan the accuser makes a dreadful assault upon the conscience at the same time, and torments the spirit with painful agonies: but the most formidable terrors, the sharpest agonies find a relief here; the very sting of death is taken away by the death of Christ. *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin, to condemn us, is the law of God; but thanks be to God through Christ Jesus*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. who hath answered the demands of the condemning law, and taken away the sting of death by his atoning sacrifice. . . .

Why then art thou so terrified, O my soul, at the thoughts of dying? Why all these shudderings of the flesh, and these agonies of spirit at the apprehensions of death and the grave? Are the sins of thy life great and numerous? Do they throng in upon thy conscience, and fill thy thoughts with tumult and terror? Remember the time, the dark and dismal hour, when Jesus thy Saviour bore all those very sins in his own body on the tree. There the demands of Divine Justice were all answered, and sin has now no power to condemn the saint, nor has death power to hurt him in his best interests. *Who shall condemn? It is Christ that has died; yea, rather has risen again*, as a complete conqueror over death. And is not Christ thy head, thy Redeemer, and the captain of thy salvation? . . .

O happy day and happy hour indeed, that shall finish the long absence of my beloved, and place me within sight of my adored Jesus? When shall I see that lovely, that illustrious friend, who laid down his own life to ransom a worm, a rebel that deserved to die? He suffered, he groaned, he died; but he rose again: the blessed Saviour arose; he lives, he reigns exalted over all the creation. Faith beholds him risen, and reigning, but it is *through a glass*, it is at a distance, and *but darkly*. I wait, I hope for a more

divine pleasure: it is a delight worth dying for to *behold him face to face, to see him as he is*, to converse with his wondrous person, and to survey his glories. Alas, my soul is too patient of this long distance and separation. O for the wings of love to bear my spirit upward in holy breathings! Methinks I would long to be near him, to be with him, to give him my highest praises and thanks for my share in his dying love. I would rise to join with the blessed acclamations, the holy songs of the saints on high, while they behold their exalted Saviour. How sweet their songs! How loud their acclamations! This is the man, the God-man who died for me! This is the Son of God, who was buffeted, who was crowned with thorns, who endured exquisite anguish, and unknown sorrows for me; who was scourged, and wounded, and crucified for me! This is the glorious person, *the Lamb of God, who washed me from my sins in his own blood*. Blessing, honour, and salvation to his holy name for ever and ever. Amen.

DR. WATTS.

Necessity for the World being embittered to the Christian.

ONE special advantage of these fires, is, the purifying of a Christian's heart from the love of the world and of present things. It is true, the world at best is base and despicable, in respect of the high estate and hopes of a believer; yet still, there is somewhat within him, that would bend him downwards, and draw him to too much complacency in outward things, if they were much to his mind. Too kind usage might sometimes make him forget himself and think himself at home, at least so much as not to entertain those longings after home, and that ardent progress homewards, that become him. It is good for us, certainly, to find hardship, and enmities, and contempts here, and to find them frequent, that we may not think them strange, but ourselves strangers, and may think it were strange for us to be otherwise entertained. This keeps the affections more clear and disengaged, sets them upward. Thus the Lord makes the world displeasing to his own, that they may turn in to him, and seek all their consolations in himself. . . .

Thus he embitters the breast of the world, to wean them; makes the world hate them, that they may the more easily hate it; suffers them not to settle upon it,

and fall into a complacency with it, but makes it unpleasant to them by many and sharp afflictions, that they may with the more willingness come off and be untied from it, and that they may remember home the more, and seek their comforts above; that finding so little below, they may turn unto him, and delight themselves in communion with him. That the sweet incense of their prayers may ascend the more thick, he kindles those fires of trials to them. For though it should not be so, yet so it is, that in times of ease they would easily grow remiss and formal in that duty. . . .

It is a hard task, and many times comes but slowly forward, to teach the heart, by discourse and speculation, to sit loose from the world at all sides, not to cleave to the best things in it, though we be compassed about with them, *though riches do increase, yet not to set our hearts on them*, Psa. lxii. 10; not to trust in such *uncertain things* as they are, as the Apostle speaks, 1 Tim. vi. 17. Therefore God is pleased to choose the more effectual way to teach his own the right and pure exercise of faith, either by withholding or withdrawing those things from them. He makes them relish the sweetness of spiritual comfort, by depriving them of those outward comforts whereon they were in most danger to have doated to excess, and so to have forgotten themselves and him. When they are reduced to necessity, and experimentally trained up easily to let go their hold of any thing earthly, and to stay themselves only upon their rock, this is the very refining of their faith, by those losses and afflictions wherewith they are exercised. They who learn bodily exercises, as fencing, &c., are not taught by sitting still, and hearing rules, or seeing others practise, but they learn by exercising themselves. The way to profit in the art of believing, or of coming to this spiritual activity of faith, is, to be often put to that work in the most difficult way, to make up all wants and losses in God, and to sweeten the bitterest griefs with his loving kindness.

LEIGHTON.

Sickness the best season for forming a right judgment of the things of time and eternity.

ALL sickness and sorrow arise from sin. If we were not unholy creatures, we could not be unhappy creatures. Because of the ill habit, occasioned by transgression, every element fights against our health by

changes and inclemencies; and the very food we eat, while it nourishes for a time, lays the foundation of disease in our bodies, already prepared by their own weakness and ill temperament to receive and increase it.

Sickness is a dismal scourge to the ungodly, and a painful spur to the gracious. To the one, when the law flashes its lightnings upon the guilty conscience, and thunders all its terrors upon the startled soul, then disease comes forward as the horrible harbinger of miseries everlasting; but, to the other, a solemn remembrancer, through the gospel of grace, both of the vanity of all earthly things, and of the nearer and near approach to immortal glory.

When sickness comes and grace can meet it; O what a just representation do they make to the soul concerning the poor honours, riches, cares, and pleasures, of this transitory world! How unimportant do all the struggles for power, splendour, titles, wealth, and pre-eminence, which have employed and enraged the past or present ages, appear! How childish and mean do those objects pass before us, for which men have lavished their time, and thrown away their souls! What bubbles, what nonsense, what glaring and horrid stupidity, have filled and directed, have engaged and overwhelmed the counsels of the greatest among men; and all to no other profit than a little fleeting vanity, with a rapid descent to lasting oblivion or ruin! Thus the soul feels, when it is quickened by sickness, to consider the low and passing affairs of earth and of time.

On the contrary, how inexpressibly great and tremendous do the things of God and eternity rise fully in view to the mind! O the worth of worlds, what are they, in some of these soul-searching moments! How is the soul astonished with the grandeur of God, and with the deep and wide importance of all that belongs to him!—Wrapt in the solemn contemplation of unutterable glories, how doth the spirit of a man tremblingly examine and solicitously inquire into the truth and extent of its interest in them! And if grace seal an answer of peace upon the heart, how doth it flutter with gladness at its safety, and how will the whole frame be agitated with a new delight in the sure prospect of eternal concern in these valuable, these only valuable things!

The Christian will be wakeningly alive to all this and more, if his disorder be such,

as can admit of reflection. Blessed be God, however, whether he can thus reflect or not; yet, being a Christian, his state is equally safe with God, through his gracious Redeemer. Whatever be the frame, the promise is sure, the covenant of God is ordered in all things and sure, and sure and faithful is God himself to perform it. It is comfortable, and indeed desirable, to have pleasant foretastes and feelings of grace and glory, under the pain or decay of the body; but they are no otherwise material to the true believer's security for heaven. If he hath not these perceptions during the short time of his sickness, he will have them abundantly after it, if it end in his dissolution; or, if it do not thus end, the want of them is a loud admonition to *make his calling and election sure*, in the days that may yet be appointed him.

If we cannot think of Christ, through the power of disease, O what a happiness is it to be assured that Christ thinks constantly and effectually of us! He *maketh all our bed in our sickness*; that is, he turns the whole frame of our condition in it for our best advantage.

O Lord, leave me not, poor and helpless sinner that I am, in my most healthful state; leave me not especially, I beseech thee, in the low, the languid, the distressing circumstances of infirmity and disease! Jesus, Master, thou art said to have borne our sicknesses, because thou barest the sins which occasioned them; take, take away from my conscience the guilt which brought disease, and then the worst part of its misery shall likewise be done away. And when, through my feebleness or disorder, I cannot act faith upon thy love; O lift my drooping spirit, carry me as one of thine own lambs in thy bosom, enfold me in thy gracious arms, and let my soul wholly commit itself, and give up its all, in quiet resignation to thee! If thou raise me from my sickness, grant that it may be for the setting forth of thy glory among men. If thou take me by sickness from this world, O thou hope and life of my soul, receive me to thyself for my everlasting happiness, and present me, as another monument of sovereign grace, before the great assembly of saints and angels in thy kingdom of heaven. AMB. SERLE.

The Value of the Scriptures in time of Sickness.

THE Scriptures (and believe me, as I speak from daily experience) are a treasure

of comfort. One who had drank deep of the cup of sorrow declares, that they *rejoice the heart*; and that for his own part, if his *delight had not been in the Divine law, he should have perished in his trouble*, Psal. cxix. 92. *These things*, says the favourite Disciple, *write we unto you* (not barely that you may have joy, but) *that your joy may be full*, 1 John i. 4. And St. Paul adds, that whatever things are written by the Spirit of inspiration, are written for our benefit, *that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*, Rom. xv. 4; that blessed hope of eternal life, which is an anchor to the soul, in all the storms of adversity; which is the oil of gladness, swimming above all the waves of affliction. By having recourse to diversions and amusements, in preference to the strong consolations suggested in the Bible, we act as injudiciously, we shall be deceived as certainly, as if, amidst the sultry heats of summer, we should seek cooling refreshment from a painted tree, and shun the embowering shady covert of a real grove.

If we are afflicted, the Scriptures acquaint us, that our afflictions are the chastisements of a Father, not the scourges of an enemy. They give us assurance, that the all-disposing Providence will not suffer us to be afflicted above what we are able to bear, 1 Cor. x. 13: that they shall turn to our good, and bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness: that they are light; are only for a moment, and yet shall work out for us a weight, an eternal weight of glory. Can all the volumes of heathen morality suggest, or all the recreations in the world afford, such rational and solid consolation? Without these consolations, afflictions will be like a latent sore, smarting and rankling in the heart; will produce discontent with our condition, and repining at Providence; a melancholy temper, and a fretful carriage. Trifling company, and worldly pleasures, will serve only to aggravate the misery, and make us inwardly mourn, that while others are in the elevation of mirth, we are pressed with a weight of calamity. Whereas, by means of those sovereign consolations, afflictions may be improved to the health of the mind, and become a most salutary expedient for furthering our spiritual happiness.

Can any thing be more animating than the privileges recorded in the charter of our salvation, the Scriptures? There

we are told, that as many as truly believe in Jesus Christ, are children of the Almighty; that the Lord who commandeth the waters, the glorious God who maketh the thunder, the everlasting King, who ruleth all things in heaven and earth, is their Father; he pities them as a father pities his own children, *Psa. ciii. 13*; and that a mother may sooner forget her sucking child, than he can remit his tender care for their present welfare and endless felicity, *Isa. xlix. 15*: that, because we are sinners, Christ Jesus, with infinitely more than paternal tenderness, bore our sins, and expiated all our guilt, in his own bleeding body upon the tree, *1 Pet. ii. 24*. Because we frequently offend, and always fail, our merciful High Priest ever liveth to make intercession for us, and to plead his Divine merits in our behalf, *Heb. vii. 25*. Because we have many corruptions within, and are assaulted by various temptations without, we have a promise of the blessed Spirit to subdue our corruptions, (*Gal. iii. 14. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.*) and renew us after the image of him who created us, *Col. iii. 10*. Because we are liable to manifold misfortunes, and visited with a variety of sorrows, the same Holy Spirit is promised, under the amiable character of a Comforter, *John xiv. 16. Luke xi. 13*. Because all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof (the youth, the beauty, the wealth, all mortal accomplishments, and every worldly enjoyment) is withering, and transient as the flower of the field, (*Isa. xl. 6.*) the Scriptures direct our view, and consign over to our faith, a most incomparable, reversionary inheritance; an inheritance reserved in Heaven for us, which is *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, *1 Pet. i. 4*.

Are these things, I would ask the physicians, likely to deject the mind, or oppress it with heaviness? Need their patients fear an aggravation of distresses from the offer, from the enjoyment of such blessings? Much more reasonably might the bleeding wound fly from the lenient hand, dread the healing balm, and court its cure from the viper's envenomed tooth. Have these truths a tendency to engender gloomy apprehensions, as the medical gentlemen are too apt to imagine, or do these increase the load which galls an afflicted mind? Rather, what heart (that attends to, and believes such glad tidings) can forbear even leaping for joy? These are calculated to put off our sackcloth, and gird

us with gladness; are enough to turn the groans of grief into the songs of gratitude.

Cheered by these reviving considerations, supported by this blessed hope, the ancient Christians were 'more than conquerors over all their calamities; they even gloried in tribulations, because these were the appointed way to the kingdom of Heaven, *Acts xiv. 22*. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had, in the world above, a better and more enduring substance, *Heb. x. 34*. They perceived with complacency the decay of their earthly tabernacle; because there remained for them, after their dissolution, *a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, *2 Cor. v. 1*. Perhaps we may not arrive at such heights of heroic and triumphant exultation; but surely we should try those remedies, which in their case were so surprisingly and happily successful.

Upon the whole, a peaceful composure of mind, and calm resignation to the all-wise will of God; a holy joy in the merits of our ever-blessed Redeemer, and a well-grounded hope of unutterable and immortal bliss, in a better world; these, these are more absolutely needful for a case like this, and will do more towards relief, than all the drugs that nature produces. And very sure I am, that these noble anodynes are dispensed no where but in the Scriptures; are to be procured no otherwise than by prayer. Other methods may stupify for a moment, but will not remove the pain, much less introduce permanent ease.

I speak not this from mere speculation, or conjectural probability. I have myself experienced the efficacy of the preceding expedients for these desirable purposes. Having been a sort of veteran in affliction, I have been under a necessity of applying these consolations; and have the utmost reason to bear witness, that there are none like them. The Scriptures are the treasury of joy and peace, and the truly religious are generally the most uniformly cheerful.

REV. J. HERVEY.

The Effects of our Troubles, which shew them to be sanctified in us.

For sad and afflictive providences in what kind or degree soever they befall us, we may warrantably conclude they are blessings to us, and come from the love of God—when they come in a proper season; when we have need of them, either to pre-

vent some sin we are falling into, or recover us out of a remiss, supine, and careless frame of spirit into which we are fallen; when *if need be, we are in heaviness*; when they are fitted both for quality and degree to work properly upon our predominant corruptions, then they look like sanctified strokes. The wisdom of God is much seen in the choice of his rods. It is usual with God to smite us in those very comforts which stole away too much of the love and delight of our souls from God; to cross us in those things from which we raised up too great expectations of comfort. These providences bespeak the jealousy of God over us, and his care to prevent far worse evils by these sad, but needful strokes. It is a good sign our troubles are sanctified to us, when they turn our hearts against sin, and not against God. Happy afflictions which make the soul fall out and quarrel only with sin.—It is a sure sign that afflicting providences are sanctified when they purge the heart from sin, and leave both heart and life more pure, heavenly, mortified, and humble, than they found them. Sanctified afflictions are cleansers; they pull down the pride, refine the earthliness, and purge out the vanity of the spirit. How many Christians can bear witness to this truth! After some sharp affliction has been upon them, how is the earthliness of their hearts purged! Oh how serious, humble, and heavenly are they, till the impressions made upon them by afflictions is worn off, and their deceitful lusts have again entangled them! And this is the reason why we are so often under the discipline of the rod. Let a Christian be but two or three years without an affliction, and he is almost good for nothing; he cannot pray, or meditate, or discourse as he was wont to do; but when a new affliction comes, now he can find his tongue, and comes to his knees again. It is a good sign that afflicting providences are sanctified to us, when we draw near to God under them, and turn to him that smites us. A wicked man under affliction *revolts more and more,—turns not to him that smites him*, but grows worse than before; formality is turned into stupidity and indolence. But if God afflicts his own people with a sanctified rod, it awakens them to a more earnest seeking of God; it makes them pray more frequently, spiritually, and fervently than ever. When Paul was buffeted by

Satan, he *besought the Lord thrice*. We may conclude our afflictions to be sanctified, and to come from the love of God to us when they do not alienate our hearts from God, but increase our love to him. This is a sure rule, whatever ends in the increase of our love to God, proceeds from the love of God to us. We may call our afflictions sanctified, when divine teachings accompany them to our souls. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law*. Sanctified afflictions teach us sensibly and effectually, when the Spirit accompanies them, the evil of sin, the vanity of the creature, the necessity of securing things that cannot be shaken. Never does a Christian take a truer measure both of his corruption and graces than under the rod. Now a man sees that filthiness which has been long contracting in prosperity, what interest the creature has in the heart, how little faith, patience, resignation, and self-denial we can find, when God calls us to the exercise of them. O it is a blessed sign that that trouble is sanctified, which makes a man thus turn in upon his own heart, search it, and humble himself before the Lord for the evils of it!

In the next place, let us take into consideration those other providences which are comfortable and pleasant. Here the question will be, how the sanctification of these providences may be discovered to us? For answering this question, I shall lay down two sorts of rules; one negative, the other positive.

It is a sign that comfort is not sanctified to us, which comes not ordinarily in the way of prayer. Then the gifts of Providence are only such as are bestowed on the worst of men, and are not the fruits of love. Whatever success, prosperity, or comfort men acquire by sinful means and indirect courses, are not sanctified mercies to them. God has cursed the ways of sin, and no blessing can follow them. Whatever prosperity or success makes men forget God, and cast off the care of duty, is not sanctified to them. When prosperity is abused to sensuality, and merely serves as fuel to maintain fleshly lusts, it is not sanctified. It is a sign that prosperity is not sanctified to men, when it swells the heart with pride and self-conceitedness. That success is not sanctified to men which takes them off from their duty, and makes them wholly negligent, or very much in-

disposed to it, Jer. ii. 31. Nor can we think that prosperity sanctified, which wholly swallows up the souls of men in their own enjoyments, and makes them regardless of public miseries or sins, Amos vi. 4—6.

But then, on the other hand, those mercies and comforts are undoubtedly sanctified to men, which humble their souls before God in the sense of their own vileness and unworthiness of them, Gen. xxxii. 10. Sanctified mercies are commonly turned into cautions against sin, Ezra ix. 13. They will engage a man's heart in love to the God of his mercies. They never satisfy a man as his portion, nor will the soul accept all the prosperity in the world upon that score, Heb. xi. 26. Nor do they make men regardless of public sins or miseries. It is a sure sign that mercies are sanctified when they make the soul more enlarged for God in duty, 2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6. That which is obtained by prayer, and returned to God again in due praise, carries its own testimonials with it, that it came from the love of God, and is a sanctified mercy to the soul. FLAVEL.

Difference between God's Chastisements of his People, and his vindictive Punishments.

THE difference between chastisements, and purely vindictive punishments, appears in three things:

I. In the causes from whence they proceed. The severest sufferings of the godly are not the effects of the Divine vengeance. It is true, they are evidences of God's displeasure against them for sin, but not of hatred; for being reconciled to them in Christ, he bears an unchangeable affection to them, and love cannot hate, though it may be angry. The motive that excites God to correct them, is love; according to that testimony of the Apostle, *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth*, Heb. xii. 6. As sometimes out of his severest displeasure he forbears to strike, and condemns obstinate sinners to prosperity here, so from the tenderest mercy he afflicts his own. But purely vindictive judgments proceed from mere wrath.

II. They differ in their measures. The evils that believers suffer are always proportioned to their strength. They are not the sudden eruptions of anger, but deliberate dispensations. David deprecates God's judgment as it is opposed to favour; *Enter not into judgment with thy ser-*

vant, O Lord, Psa. cxliii. 2; and Jeremiah desires God's judgment as it is opposed to fury, *O Lord, correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger*, Jer. x. 24. It is the gracious promise of God to David, 2 Sam. vii. 14, with respect to Solomon, *If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men*; that is, chastise him moderately; for in the style of the Scripture, as things are magnified by the epithet *divine* or *of God*, as *the cedars of God*, that is, very tall; and Nineveh is called *the city of God*,* that is, very great: so, to signify things that are in a mediocrity, the Scripture uses the epithet *human* or *of men*. And according to the rule of opposition, the rod of God is an extraordinary affliction which destroys the sinner; it is such a punishment as a man can neither inflict nor endure; but the rod of men is a moderate correction, that doth not exceed the strength of the patient. But every purely vindictive punishment which the law pronounces, is in proportion to the nature of the crime, not the strength of the criminal.

III. They are distinguished by the intention and end of God in inflicting them. In chastisements God primarily designs the profit of his people, that they may be *partakers of his holiness*, Heb. xii. 10. When they are secure and carnal, he awakens conscience by the sharp voice of the rod, to reflect upon sin, to make them observant for the future, to render their affections more indifferent to the world and stronger towards Heaven. The Apostle expresses the nature of chastisements, *When we are judged, we are chastened* or instructed *by the Lord*, 1 Cor. xi. 32: they are more lively lessons than those which are by the word alone, and make a deeper impression upon the heart. David acknowledges, *Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now I have kept thy word*, Psa. cxix. 67. Corrupt nature makes God's favours pernicious, but his grace makes our punishments profitable. Briefly, they are not satisfactions for what is passed, but admonitions for the time to come. But purely vindictive judgments are not inflicted for the reformation of an offender, but to preserve the honour of the Sovereign, and public order, and to make compensation for the breach of the law. If any advantage accrue to the offender, it is acci-

* See Jonah iii. 3. in the Hebrew.

dental, and beside the intention of the judge. The end of chastisements upon believers, is to prevent their final destruction: *When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world*, 1 Cor. xi. 32. And this sweetens and allays all their sufferings, as the Psalmist declares, *Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head*, Psa. cxli. 5. But the vindictive punishment of a malefactor is not to prevent his condemnation; for death is sometimes the sentence. In this respect the temporal evils that befall the wicked and the godly, though materially the same, yet legally differ; for to the wicked they are so many earnest of the complete payment they shall make to justice in another world, the beginning of eternal sorrows; but to the godly they are in order to their salvation. They are as the Red Sea, through which the Israelites passed to the land of promise, but the Egyptians were drowned in it. Briefly, their sufferings differ as much in their issue, as the kingdoms of heaven and hell.

DR. BATES.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, I do not afflict thee in hatred, but in covenant love. My design is to mortify the body of sin, and therefore I give thee this wholesome physic. Thou hast many bad humours and corruptions, for which I have appointed this sovereign medicine. Trust my skill—believe my love—depend upon mine arm—and thou wilt infallibly find it profitable to the spirit, however painful to the flesh. Wait, and the end shall be blessed.

To this truth the prophet Isaiah bears a clear testimony. He explains the Lord's design in afflicting his people; and tells them, it was to purge them from their iniquity, to keep them from the love of sin, and to restrain the practice of it. He afflicted them in mercy; but he afflicted their enemies in justice. *Hath he smitten Israel as he smote those that smote him?* No, he has not. Or, *is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?* No, he chastises his in love; he has appointed the measure, the time, the degree, of their correction: *In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind; by this* (moderate affliction) *therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob*

be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin—to keep him back from sin in general, and from the sin of idolatry in particular, as it follows in the prophet: *When he maketh all the stones of the altar like chalk-stones that are beaten in sunder, then the groves and images shall not stand up*. The altar, at which they offered their idol-worship, shall be broken down, like stones burned in pieces for lime, and the groves and images shall not stand up, but shall be broken down also. These happy effects shall be brought about by sanctified affliction—iniquity shall be purged—sin shall be restrained—idolatry shall be thrown down. And God says, this shall be *all* the fruit and end of his chastening. He tells his people of his design, that they might know their affliction would bring forth good fruit, and that they might wait patiently for the fulfilling of his promise. Blessed are all they that wait for him: they shall never be disappointed of their hope.

How gracious is God in his dealings with his children! He provides the best for them, informs them of it, and, because they have a fallen nature opposite to his holy mind and will, an enemy to his glory, and to their own peace, he acquaints them with his design in subduing it. He appoints affliction for this end. It is *the chastening of the Lord*. He promises them strength to bear it, and comfort under it. Nothing but good shall flow from it. Iniquity, their worst enemy, shall be crucified; actual sin, springing from the iniquity of their nature, shall be mortified; the heart shall be deadened to its old idols, and as it dies to them, it shall be happier in the love of God. O blessed cross! what mercies dost thou bring with thee. Is not that blessed indeed, which, under God, produces such unspeakable mercies? Take it up then, O my soul; bear it patiently, and expect the choicest blessings of the Father's love from it. Why dost thou refuse? It is heavy. It is painful. True; but what makes it so? The burden is from thy rebel will. The pain comes from thy corruption, unwilling to be mortified. Take it up in faith, and thou wilt find strength enough to bear it, and blessings enough to make it a matter of all joy. Lord God, reconcile me to my daily cross. May thy will in it be done. Mortify sin, weaken its power, deaden its affections and lusts. Only, Lord, whatever cross thou sendest, give grace with it, that I may bear it patiently, and may wait for its promised fruit. Thou knowest what would

stop me in my heavenly journey; if it be my bosom favourite, the dearest object of my love, O tear it from my heart. Thou hast given me a desire to have every rival dethroned. O come, and reign alone in me, almighty Jesus, and subdue whatever opposes thy lawful government. My Saviour and my God, make all within me feel the power of thy cross. Crucify the body of sin. Spare nothing that would hinder my walking with thee, or would deprive me of thy friendship and favours. I bless thee, I worship thee, I glorify thee, for this infinite grace, that thou hast made me willing to have all mine idols pulled down. On thee I depend every moment for keeping them down. O my loving Jesus, carry on thy work, and, in thine own way, subdue sin in me; let me be planted together in the likeness of thy death, that I may be also in the likeness of thy resurrection—dead to sin, but alive to God. I ask this for thy great name's sake. Let it be thy good pleasure to hear and answer. I believe thou wilt. I have thy word for it. There I rest. Amen and Amen.

REV. W. ROMAINE.

We should not judge of Providences till we see the end of them.

JUDGE nothing before the time. When the end cometh, pass a judgment on providential dispensations; not before. *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord*, Psal. cvii. 43. . . .

God works often above means, sometimes without them; nay, sometimes contrary to them: but it is a settled rule with him, which every believer has found true in experience, viz.—he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. There may appear some flaws at present, but there will be none in the end; it will appear to be the right way. *Wherefore, humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up*, James iv. 10. Humbling providences are sweetest in the end, for they bring a man to himself; and till a man be thoroughly emptied of self, he can never, as he ought, improve Christ. What though God bereave you of children, friends, substance, health, *all is well*. There is no empty, void space, but what he himself fills up. 'Surely,' says one, 'he dieth oft whose life is bound up in the dying creature; as oft as the creature fails, his hope fails, his heart fails; when the creature

dieth, his hope giveth up the ghost.' He only lives an unchangeable life, that by faith can live on an unchangeable God. Do not say what his end is, till you see it. Many a saint has eaten his own words for want of this. *I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee*, Psal. xxxi. 22. These hasty speeches are seldom right ones.

Bring the promise and a promising God close together; whatever be the promise, consider he is faithful that hath promised; all intervening difficulties should be viewed in the light of the promise. What is that? Why, all things are yours, and *all things work together for good*. We need our crosses as well as our comforts. Are we through many tribulations to enter the kingdom? Then we must have these tribulations ere we possess it.

REV. J. HILL.

Our Sin in looking to second causes in Affliction.

THE Shunamitess, when she answered *It is well*, 2 Kings iv. 26, wholly looks over all second causes, and goes directly to the first. God hath done it, all events are appointed and ordered by him. *My times*, says the Psalmist, *are in thine hands*, Psal. xxxi. 15. All that concerns me thou hast the care of, and thou wilt perform it. There is nothing wherein believers shew a meaner spirit, and yet few sins beset them more easily, than an anxious concern and fretful care about some outward things, which have in themselves no power to do good or evil, any otherwise than as instruments in God's hands to attain his appointed end. Shall we quarrel with the sword, because it suffered itself to be drawn? or be angry with the air, because it is infected? No second cause can act without the direction of the first; there is no design in the instrument, as an instrument that acts, but as ordered by him who uses it. It has grieved me to hear Christians aggravate their trials, and debase their profession, by looking back to this and the other circumstance, dwelling upon that, as what gave rise to the whole affliction. 'O! if I had but had such advice—had I but thought!—That I should consent my child should go to such a place!—That I should not foresee, &c.' And yet all the while the man believes God's purposes and decrees, and that he worketh all things after the counsel of his

own will. How beneath a Christian is this ! Can you set aside divine counsels, or would you alter an ordered covenant ? Use the means, but live upon God's power, wisdom, and faithfulness, who blesses or blasts them just as he pleases. To do otherwise, is to make your burden a thousand times heavier than it is.

It is well. That is the only reconciling principle under the severest trials ; and even under lighter strokes, mere casualties as they appear to us, the soul can have no rest till he issues his concern here. I have known little insignificancies very vexing and grieving ; and the more so, because one thinks how easily they might have been prevented. But the best way to quiet the soul is to eye God's hand. *I was dumb,* says the Psalmist, *I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it,* Psal. xxxix. 9.

REV. J. HILL.

When one Affliction is past, we must prepare for others.

WHEN one hour of suffering is past, we must hold ourselves in readiness for another conflict. The hour which had been appointed for the inward agony of Christ, was already past ; now he speaks of another hour that was coming on, of which he afterwards says, *This is your hour, and the power of darkness.* Our blessed Saviour has his eye on that hour, and gives us a noble pattern, to teach us that we should never be too secure, though we have got the better of a temptation. All the towering steep hills of trials are not yet ascended, and when we think we have gained the summit, another hill may present itself unexpectedly to our view. Skilful mariners, after weathering out a storm, immediately repair the ship and tackling, that they may be able to ride out another storm. Thus should we prepare ourselves for the storms of trials and temptations.

RAMBACH.

Saints must not expect to fare better than Christ did.

I HOPE there is none of us can take it ill that Christ hath imposed so severe a duty upon us ; for we may assure ourselves he requires no more of us than what himself hath undergone before, so that we can suffer nothing for him but what he hath suffered before for us. Have we grief and trouble in our hearts ? So had he, Matt. xxvi. 38.—Have we pains and tortures in our bodies ? So had he,

Matt. xxvii. 29, 30.—Are we derided and scoffed at ? So was he, Matt. xxvii. 31.—Are we arraigned or condemned, yea, do we suffer death itself ? It is no more than what our Lord and Master hath done before. And let us remember what he told us when he was upon the earth, *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.* If we be Christ's disciples, we cannot expect to fare better in the world than Christ himself did ; neither indeed can we fare so ill, for it is impossible that we should undergo so much for him as he hath undergone for us, ours being only the sufferings of men, his the sufferings of one who was God as well as man ; whereby sufferings in general are sanctified to our human nature, it having already undergone them in the person of the Son of God, so that it can be now no disparagement at all to undergo any trouble, as hatred, reproach, poverty, pain, yea, death itself, or any other calamity whatsoever in this world, seeing the Son of God himself, He that made the world, underwent the same while himself was in it. And therefore we need not think it below us to stoop down and take up the cross of Christ, as considering that Christ, having borne it before us, hath so blessed and sanctified it unto us, that it is now become an honourable, an advantageous, yea, and a pleasant cross, to them that bear it patiently, thankfully, and constantly as they ought to do ; especially seeing it is such a cross as leads unto a crown, and whatsoever we can do or suffer for Christ here, will be fully recompensed with glory hereafter ; and therefore, instead of being troubled to take up our cross, we are rather to rejoice that we have any to take up. . . .

And let us not think that we shall deny ourselves any real pleasure or profit, by renouncing our sins ; for what pleasure can we have in displeasing God, or profit in losing our own souls ? No ; we shall gratify ourselves more than we can imagine, by denying ourselves, as much as we are able, whatsoever is offensive or displeasing unto God ; for we may be sure, he that came into the world on purpose to save us from evil, commands us nothing but for our own good, neither would he ever have obliged us to deny ourselves, if we could have been saved without it ; and as for the cross, that he was so well acquainted with, that he would never have imposed it upon us to

take it up, but that it is indispensably necessary for us. And therefore if we be what we pretend, real and true Christians, let us manifest it to the world and to our own consciences, by denying ourselves whatsoever Christ hath denied us, and by observing whatsoever he hath commanded us, even to the taking up of any cross, that he for his own sake shall suffer to be laid upon us, still remembering that self-denial, though it be unpleasant, is a most necessary duty; and the cross, though it be never so heavy, is but short, and hath nothing less than a crown annexed unto it, a glorious and eternal crown, which all those shall most certainly obtain, who thus deny themselves. **BP. BEVERIDGE.**

Now this is reason enough, and carries it beyond all other reason, why Christians are called to a suffering life, seeing the Lord and Author of that calling, suffered himself so much. *The Captain*, or Leader, *of our salvation*, as the Apostle speaks, was *consecrated by suffering*, Heb. ii. 10: that was the way by which *he entered into the holy place*, where he is now *our everlasting High-Priest, making intercession for us*. If he be our Leader to salvation, must not we follow him in the way he leads, whatsoever it is? If it be (as we see it is) by the way of sufferings, we must either follow on in that way, or fall short of salvation; for there is no other leader, nor any other way than that which he opened; so that there is not only a congruity in it, that his followers be conformed to him in suffering, but a necessity, if they will follow him on, till they attain to glory. And the consideration of both these, cannot but argue a Christian into a resolution for this royal way of suffering that leads to glory, through which their King and Lord himself went to his glory. It could hardly be believed at first that this was his way, and we can as hardly yet believe that it must be ours. *O fools, and slow of heart to believe! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?* Luke xxiv. 25, 26.

Would you be at glory, and will you not follow your Leader in the only way to it? Must there be another way cut out for you by yourself? O absurd! *Shall the servant be greater than his master?* John xiii. 16. Are not you fairly dealt with? If you have a mind to Christ, you shall have full as much of the world's good-will as he had: *if it hate you*, he

bids you remember, *how it hated him*, John xv. 18.

But though there were a way to do otherwise, would you not, if the love of Christ possessed your hearts, rather choose to share with him in his lot, and would you not find delight in the very trouble of it? Is not this conformity to Jesus, the great ambition of all his true-hearted followers? *We carry about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus*, says the great Apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 10. Besides the unspeakable advantage to come, which goes linked with this, that *if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him*, 2 Tim. ii. 12, there is a glory, even in this present resemblance, that we are conformed to the image of the Son of God in sufferings. Why should we desire to leave him? Are you not one with him? Can you choose but have the same common friends and enemies? Would you willingly, if it might be, could you find in your heart to be friends with that world which hated your Lord and Master? Would you have nothing but kindness and ease, where he had nothing but enmity and trouble? Or would you not rather, when you think aright of it, refuse and disdain to be so unlike him? As that good duke said, when they would have crowned him king of Jerusalem, 'No,' said he, 'by no means, I will not wear a crown of gold where Jesus was crowned with thorns.' . . .

It is a sweet, a joyful thing to be a sharer with Christ in any thing. All enjoyments wherein he is not, are bitter to a soul that loves him, and all sufferings with him are sweet. The worst things of Christ are more truly delightful than the best things of the world; his afflictions are sweeter than their pleasures, his reproach more glorious than their honours, and more rich than their treasures, as Moses accounted them, Heb. xi. 26. Love delights in likeness and communion, not only in things otherwise pleasant, but in the hardest and harshest things, which have not any thing in them desirable, but only that likeness. So that this thought is very sweet to a heart possessed with this love: What does the world by its hatred, and persecutions, and revilings for the sake of Christ, but make me more like him, give me a greater share with him, in that which he did so willingly undergo for me? 'When he was sought for to be made a king,' as St. Bernard remarks, 'he escaped; but when he was sought

to be brought to the cross, he freely yielded himself.' And shall I shrink and creep back from what he calls me to suffer for his sake? Yea, even all my other troubles and sufferings, I will desire to have stamped thus, with this conformity to the sufferings of Christ, in the humble, obedient, cheerful, endurance of them, and the giving up my will to my Father's.

LEIGHTON.

Christ has consecrated to us the way of Suffering.

THE Lord Christ, being consecrated and perfected through sufferings, has consecrated the way of suffering for all that follow him in their march to glory. All complaints of sufferings, all despondencies under them, all fears of them in prospect, are rendered unjust and unreasonable by the sufferings of Christ. It is surely right that they should be contented with his lot here, who desire to be received into his glory hereafter. To elucidate the above observation, and to reconcile us to our lot of sufferings in following the Captain of our salvation, we should consider, that they are made necessary and unavoidable. The Apostle tells believers, that they are *predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God*, Rom. viii. 29. And no small part of this conformity consists in their afflictions and sufferings. The Head having passed through them, there is a measure of afflictions belonging to the body, which every member is to bear his share of, 1 Cor. xii. 26. And the Lord Jesus himself has given us this law, that every one who will be his disciple must *take up his cross and follow him*. Discipleship and the cross are inseparably connected by the unchangeable law and constitution of Christ himself. And the Gospel is full of warnings and instructions to this purpose; that none may complain they are surprised, or that any thing did befall them in the course of their profession which they looked not for. Men may deceive themselves or others with vain hopes and expectations, but the Gospel deceives none; it tells them plainly beforehand, that *through much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God*, and that *they who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecutions*. But we would be children, and not be chastised; we would be gold, and not be tried; we would overcome, and not be put to fight and contend; we would be Christians, and not suffer!

But all these things are contrary to the irrevocable law of our profession.

Again: All sufferings for the Gospel are now made honourable. The sufferings of Christ himself were indeed ignominious, and that not only in the esteem of men, but also in the nature of them, and by God's constitution. They were part of the curse, as it is written, *Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree*. And as such our Lord considered them, when he wrestled with and conquered the shame as well as the sharpness of them. But he has rendered all the sufferings of his people for his sake very honourable in themselves, whatever they are in the reputation of a blind and perishing world. Hence the Apostle rejoiced that they had the honour to *suffer shame for his name*, Acts v. 41. that is, the things which the world looked upon as shameful, but themselves knew to be honourable. When Moses came to make a right judgment concerning this matter, he *esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt*, Heb. xi. 26.

Beside, they are made useful and profitable. The Lord Jesus Christ, by consecrating our sufferings as our way of following him, has quite altered their nature and tendency; he has made them good, useful, and profitable. He has thereby cut them off from their old stock of wrath and the curse, and planted them on that of love and good-will. He has taken them off from the covenant of works, and translated them into that of grace. He has turned their course from death towards life and immortality; mixing his grace, love, and wisdom, with these *bitter waters*, he has made them sweet and wholesome. And if we would benefit by them, we must always have regard to this consecration of them.

He has also made them safe. Never did a believer perish by afflictions or persecutions; never was real gold or silver consumed or lost in this furnace. Hypocrites, indeed, and false professors, the fearful and unbelieving are discovered by them, and stripped of their hopes: but they that are disciples indeed, are never safer than in this way, and that because it is *consecrated* for them. Sometimes, it may be, through their unbelief, and want of heeding the Captain of their salvation, they are wounded and cast down by them for a season, but they are still in the way. Nay, it is not only absolutely a safe way, but comparatively more safe than the way of prosperity.

DR. J. OWEN.

*The most irreproachable are not proof
against Calumny.*

THE most innocent and irreproachable behaviour is not sufficient to secure a good man against the envenomed darts of calumny and false accusations.

What could our blessed Saviour do more than he had done, to avoid the least suspicion of rebellion and seditious practices? When the people were for laying hold of him, in order to make him a king, as it were by force, he fled from them, John vi. 15. Nay, he even paid the tribute-money for himself and Peter, Matt. xvii. 27, and when, about four days before his passion, he was asked, Whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not, he returned this plain answer, *Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's.* Even his very enemies could not make the least exception against this wise decision in so ensnaring a dispute; but were astonished at his answer, and went away without saying a word, Luke xx. 26. But all this caution was not sufficient to secure our blessed Saviour from the false imputation of entertaining rebellious designs; for, notwithstanding all these appearances of the most resigned submission to the civil power, his enemies now charge him with perverting the people, forbidding them to pay tribute, and setting himself up for a king. If the great Captain of our salvation, our ever-glorious Head was thus basely treated, his members can certainly expect no better treatment from his and their inveterate enemies. Therefore, be of good courage, all ye that are determined to follow Christ as your Leader, and to walk innocently and unblameably amidst a perverse and wicked generation among whom ye live! Be assured, that all these precautions will not absolutely secure you against calumny, lies, and slanderous imputations. However, think not such treatment strange or uncommon; but comfort yourselves, since your blessed Chief was thus also treated, and be content in this also to be made like unto *The First-born among many brethren.*

RAMBACH.

*A clear Conscience the best Relief under
Reproaches.*

A GOOD conscience is only in our own

power, but a good name is in the power of every slanderous tongue to blast; and indeed it is a thing almost impossible to keep at once both a good conscience and a good name too. The world is shattered and fractured into so many parties; and each of them of such different relishes of good and bad, that unless our actions have as universal a gust, as, according to the Rabbin's Tradition, the Israelites' manna had, that it had the taste of that which they best fancied, unless our actions have such a universal gust, we must of necessity fall under misconstructions, censures, and defamations; for indeed if you observe it, usually our similitude to others makes them think and speak well of us. Whosoever commends another, commends somewhat that he supposeth at least he hath in himself; and this the reason of that woe of our Saviour, *Woe to you when all men shall speak well of you,* Luke vi. 26. When wicked men speak well of us, it is a sign we are but too like them. Even a heathen could say, when he was highly applauded by the vulgar rout, 'What evil have I done, that these men praise me?' The very reproaches of ungodly men, are the best testimonials that can be given of an excellent and singular Christian. In a strict and holy conversation there is that contradiction to the loose profaneness of the world, as at once both convinceth and offends them, reproves them and galls them; and if we thus reproach them by our lives, we must again expect that they will reproach us by their lyings and slanders. It is a sinful tenderness of our esteem among men when we tack about with every popular breath that blows; such must needs prefer the praise of men before the praise of God; and let me tell you, this is as fruitless as it is sinful, since as the wind always blows from contrary points and quarters, so while some extol us, others will as much vilify and scorn us. It is miserable to live upon the reports and opinions of others; let us not reckon what they say, but what reports our own consciences make us; it is far better to offend the whole world, than God and conscience. And if any storm of obloquy, reproach, railing, or bitter cursing at any time batters upon us, how sweet then is it to retire inward to the calm innocency of our own hearts, where are a thousand witnesses within us, that tell us we have not de-

served them! How comfortable is it to remit our cause to God, and leave our vindication to him for whose sake we suffer reproach! Thus we find the Prophet Jeremy appealing unto God: *I heard the defaming of many; report, say they, and we will report it*, Jer. xx. 10—12; that is, let us raise a disgraceful and a reproachful report of him: but, says he, *O Lord of Hosts, thou that triest the righteous, thou that seest the reins and the heart, unto thee have I opened my cause!* Why thus if while wicked men are maliciously conspiring how to blot, sully, and stain our names, if all this while we can keep our consciences clear, what need we much care how the wind blows abroad, since we are harboured under the retreat of a peaceful conscience? They may possibly persuade others to believe their calumnies; but God, who searcheth the heart and conscience, knows that we are injured, and he is hastening forward a day wherein he will clear up our righteousness; and then the testimony of one good conscience, will put ten thousand slanders to silence. Bp. HOPKINS.

*Some Comforting and Profitable
Reflections under Affliction.*

WHAT an effectual method the Lord takes to administer comfort to his people under all their losses and trials! He offers himself in the place of every thing taken away by him; which repairs the loss abundantly, and makes an exchange truly desirable. He does not promise friends or another husband to the widow, or to raise up an earthly parent to the fatherless,—though he often does these things; but his promises are more suitable to his own liberality and glory. *A father to the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, is God in his holy habitation. He relieveth the fatherless and widow. And in him the fatherless findeth mercy.* He takes them more immediately under his own protection and care; and he will make up their deficiency of outward comfort and blessings. Thus when he takes away an earthly, he gives them a heavenly blessing. When Christ commanded the young man in the Gospel to sell all that he had, he promised him a *treasure in heaven*. When he called Abraham to forsake his own country and kindred, he promised himself to be his shield and *exceeding great reward*. When

Joseph was separated from his friends, his father and his father's house, it is particularly added, *and the Lord was with Joseph*, that is, in an especial manner. He more peculiarly than heretofore, manifested himself to him, supported and comforted him, and gave him also favour in the eyes of all he had to do with. He made his dungeon a palace to him, and the very gate of heaven. Thus when God takes away any earthly comfort, he proposes an exchange for one that is heavenly and spiritual. He offers himself to us in the room of all. O blessed God, thou art enough. My soul is satisfied. . . .

How is it that I am not always rejoicing with exceeding great joy, when I suffer reproach for Christ, who in every condition, is with his people and is not ashamed of them? No unworthiness, no misery, shall prevent Christ from owning his people and openly avowing them to be his brethren. He is a brother born for adversity, a friend to the friendless and fatherless. He is ashamed of none but those who are ashamed of him, however unworthy and miserable they may be. His people are often the offscouring of all things: the world rejects, persecutes, and hates them; but their elder Brother, the Lord of glory, is not ashamed of them. Let the world and the men of the world take their course and do their worst; let the devil rage and the powers of hell be stirred up in fury against them; loaded with reproaches and scorn, covered all over with the filth and dirt of false accusations, in rags, in dungeons, and in the most shameful deaths,—Christ is not ashamed of them; nay, he owns them and says, *Surely, these are my brethren, the children of my Father*. He will not pass them by in poverty and want: no, but he will own them and glory in them. And shall I be ashamed of Christ, of his Gospel, or of any that bear his name? God forbid. He came into prison and into the furnace to own us; it cost him all he was worth; being rich, *for our sakes he became poor*; he lost his life in the most shameful manner in our cause; being the eternal God, blessed for ever, holy, powerful, and all-sufficient in himself, he is not ashamed of us poor worms of the earth, but owns us as his brethren: and can it be that I should ever be ashamed of him? Yet nothing but grace can enable me to profess and own him before a gainsaying world.

REV. T. CHARLES.

I SEE God in every thing; in pain I feel him, and know he is come near to me on some gracious design. I never have so lively a sense of the being, presence, and goodness of God, as in pain, sickness, and suffering; it puts me on thinking, and I cannot avoid coming to this conclusion, that it is ordained by his immediate will, and that he does it in mercy.

Instead of repining at bodily disorders, think how many have much greater, and how to be thankful both for those you have and have not. Pain, affliction, &c., is only God's speaking louder. . . .

In pain, sickness, trouble, methinks I hear God saying, Take this medicine, exactly suited to the case, prepared and weighed by my own hands, and consisting of the choicest drugs which heaven affords. . . .

How can I be happy but in God? And how can I be in God with a will contrary to, or but indifferent to his? No quiet in the Spirit till we settle on this basis of rest and satisfaction; acquiescence in the will of God; contentedness under the accidents of life; patience with the humours of all about us; and cheerful submission to the demands of the present hour.

God, who knows my state, and the danger I am in, sends pain to warn me of it, to make me dread sin more than pain, and to think how I shall ever be able to endure remediless, everlasting pain.

Suffering is an excellent preacher, sent immediately from heaven, to speak aloud in the name of God to the heart, mind, and conscience, and has saved many a soul, when, humanly speaking, nothing else could. If it was not for pain I should spend less time with God. . . .

In affliction see the necessity of it, and be humbled; see the use of it, and improve it; see the love there is in it, and be thankful. I know of no greater blessing than health, except pain and sickness. . . .

However I am crossed, or whatever I suffer, God does me no wrong, intends me no hurt, designs my good. I may well be patient. I must do more; there is obligation in the case; I must be thankful. . . .

God does not regard what he makes us suffer, if he can but keep us out of hell. When I am in pain, I have a strong conviction of my obligation to Christ for delivering me from eternal pain.

When pain comes, God comes. Wel-

come pain. We should bear pain better if we did not increase it by impatience, or apprehension of the issue, and suffer nothing but the pain. . . .

Come what will, God does me no harm. If God has given me Christ, what have I to complain of; and how should I welcome the disease, or decay, which is sent to secure him to me, and bring me to him! . . .

When pain comes, I can hardly think of any thing but God; when I am at ease, the heart returns to its bent, the world resumes its place in it, and God leaves me.

God consults my interest in every thing, not me; and though I know he cannot be mistaken in what he does, I find it hard to give my consent to it.

When pain comes, it seems as if it was reached out to me by the hands of an angel who is come post with it from heaven; glad of the office of administering to my safety and improvement; rejoicing in the love of God towards me, and calling on me to join with him in blessing God for it.

God is always with me, though I am not with him; and because I do not advert to his presence, he sends pain to introduce and even force me into his company. . . .

I never have such a lively and full conviction of my weakness and absolute dependence on God, as in pain or sickness. Acquiescence in his blessed will, choice of what he chooses for me, and thankfulness for the mercy, I know to be my duty, and would gladly work this disposition in myself, but find, by repeated experience, that I have no more power over my mind than I have over my body.

By pain God drives me to prayer, teaches me what prayer is, inclines me to pray. . . .

If we do not propose to ourselves the same end in suffering which God does, self-knowledge and the purification of the heart, it must necessarily be without effect.

Because I trifle with my soul, and do not enter resolutely into a process of mortification, God, in mercy, takes the matter into his own hands, and sends pain to do that for me, which I am not willing to do for myself.

God sometimes will not let me sleep, but keeps me awake to catechise me; and is always ready with some new instruction or conviction. . . .

When I suffer most, I will comfort myself with thinking that I might, and that many

do, suffer more; and that all I can suffer is not only much less than I deserve, but ordained in mercy as the means of my eternal happiness.

Trouble is the engine in God's hands to lift us up to heaven.

REV. T. ADAM.

Comforting Thoughts for the Weak and Languishing Christian in Sickness.

AND are you very weak? is sickness in the chamber; and death at the door? Come then, let us both sit down with dissolution and eternity in view; and encourage one another from the word, the precious word of God. I have as much need of such consolations as you, and may, perhaps, have occasion to use them as soon.

What is there formidable in death, which our ever blessed Redeemer has not taken away? Do the pangs of dissolution alarm us? should they be sharp, they cannot be very long; and our exalted Lord, with whom are the issues of death, knows what dying agonies mean. He has said, in the multitude of his tender mercies, *Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness*, Isa. xli. 10. This promise authorizes us to say boldly, *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me*, Psal. xxiii. 4.

Are we afraid to enter into a strange, invisible, unknown world? It is the world, into which our divine Master is gone; where he has prepared everlasting mansions (John xiv. 2. Luke xvi. 22) for his people, and has appointed his angels to conduct us thither. Having such a convoy, what should we dread? and, going to our eternal home, where our all-bountiful Redeemer is, why should we be reluctant?

Are we concerned, on account of what we leave? We leave the worse to possess the better. If we leave our earthly friends, we shall find more loving and lovely companions. We shall be admitted among the *innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, that are written in heaven*, Heb. xii. 22, 23. Do we leave the ordinances of religion, which we have attended with

great delight? leave the word of God which has been sweeter to our souls than honey to our mouths? We shall enter into the temple not made with hands and join that happy choir, who *rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*, Rev. iv. 8. And if our Bible is no more, we shall have all that is promised, we shall behold all that is described therein. If we drop the map of our heavenly Canaan, it will be to take possession of its blissful territories. *That city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof*, Rev. xxi. 23. O! blessed, for ever blessed be the grace of our God, and the merits of his Christ! We shall exchange the scanty stream for the boundless ocean; and if we no longer pick the first ripe grapes, we shall gather the copious, the abounding, the never-ending vintage.

Do we fear the guilt of our innumerable sins? Adored be the inexpressible loving-kindness of God our Saviour! Our sins have been punished in the blessed Jesus: *The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 6. *He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. *So that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1. O that we may be enabled, with the Apostle, to make our boast of this Saviour, and to triumph in this faith! *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us*.

Is judgment the thing that we fear? To the pardoned sinner it has nothing terrible. The Lord Jesus, who keeps his servants from falling, *presents them also faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy*, Jude ver. 24. Observe the sweet expressions, *presents faultless, and with exceeding joy*. Justly, therefore, does the Apostle reckon it among the privileges of the Christians, that they are come *to God the Judge of all*, Heb. xii. 23; for the Judge is our friend, the Judge is our advocate, the Judge is our propitiation, the Judge is our righteousness. And is it not a privilege to come to such a judge, as will not so

much as mention our iniquities to us, but condescend to take notice of our poor unworthy services; who sits on the great tribunal, not to pass the sentence of damnation upon us, but to give us a reward; a reward of free grace, and of inconceivable richness?

Let me conclude with those charming words of the evangelical prophet, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins*, Isa. xl. 1, 2. May the God of our life and salvation make these Scriptures be unto us, as a staff in the traveller's hand, and as a cordial to the fainting heart, that we may be strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; that we may glorify him in death, and glorify him for death; because death will introduce us into his immediate presence, where we shall be sorrowful no more, sinful no more, at a distance no more; but be joyful, and be like our Lord; love him with all our souls, praise him to all eternity.

REV. J. HERVEY.

Some Considerations against Fretfulness at the Delays of Providence.

DURING the delays of Providence, the hearts and hopes of the people of God may be very low, and much discouraged. The causes of these despondencies are partly from ourselves, and partly from Satan. If we duly examine our own hearts about it, we shall find that these sinkings of heart are the immediate effects of unbelief. We do not depend and rely upon the word, with that full confidence that is due to the infallible word of a faithful and unchangeable God. Faith is the only cordial that relieves the heart against these faintings and despondencies; where this is wanting or is weak, no wonder that our hearts sink when discouragements are before us.—Our judging things by the rules of sense is a great cause of our discouragements. We conclude, that according to the appearances of things will be their issues. In all these things Satan carries a design upon us. Hence he takes occasion to suggest hard thoughts of God, and to beat off our souls from all confidence in him, and expectations from him; and his suggestions gain the more credit with us because they are con-

firmed and attested by sense and feeling.

To assist the soul in this difficulty, I shall offer some farther help, beside what has been already given under the first caution, in the following considerations. Though Providence do not yet perform the mercies you wait for, yet you have no ground to entertain hard thoughts of God; for it is possible God never gave you any ground for your expectation of these things from him. It may be you have no promise to found your hope upon; and if so, why shall God be suspected and dishonoured by you in a case wherein his truth and faithfulness were never engaged to you? If we are crossed in our outward concerns, and see our expectations of prosperity dashed; if we see such or such an outward comfort removed, from which we promised ourselves much; why must God be accused for this? These things you promised yourselves; but where did God promise you prosperity and the continuance of those comfortable things to you? Produce his promise, and shew wherein he hath broken it. It is not enough for you to say, there is a general promise in the Scripture, that *God will withhold no good thing*, for that promise has its limitations; it is expressly limited to such as *walk uprightly*. It concerns you then to examine whether you have done so, before you quarrel with Providence for non-performance of it. Search thine own heart; reflect upon thine own ways. Seest thou not so many flaws in thine integrity, so many turnings aside from God, both in heart and life, that may justify God not only in withholding what thou lookest for, but in removing all that thou enjoyest? And besides this limitation as to the object, this promise is limited in the matters or things promised, by the wisdom and will of God, which is the only rule by which they are measured out to men in this world, that is, such mercies, in such proportions as he sees needful and most conducive to your good; and these given out in such times and seasons as are of his own appointment, not yours. God never came under an absolute, unlimited tie for outward comforts to any of us; and if we are disappointed, we can blame none but ourselves. Who bid us expect rest, ease, delight in this world? He has never told us we shall be rich, healthy, and at ease in our habitations; but on the contrary, he has often told us,

that we must expect troubles in the world, and that through much tribulations we must enter into his kingdom. All that he stands bound to us by promise for, is to be with us in trouble; and to sanctify all his providences to our good at last. But if you say you have long waited upon God for spiritual mercies, and still those mercies are deferred, and your eyes fail whilst you look for them; I would desire you seriously to consider of what kind those spiritual mercies are, for which you have so long waited upon God. Spiritual mercies are of two sorts; such as belong to the essence, the very being of the new creature, without which it must fail; or its well-being, and the comfort of the inner man, without which you cannot live so cheerfully as you would. The mercies of the former kind are absolutely necessary, and therefore put into absolute promises; but for the rest they are dispensed to us in such measures, and at such seasons as the Lord sees fit, and many of his own people live for a long time without them. The gift and continuance of the Spirit to quicken, sanctify, and unite us with Christ, is necessary; but his joys and comforts not so. A child of light may walk in darkness. He lives by faith, and not by feeling.—You complain, that Providence delays to perform to you the mercies you have prayed and waited for; but have you right ends in your desires after these mercies? The want of a good aim is the reason why we want good success in our prayers. It may be that we pray for prosperity, and our end is to please the flesh; we beg and wait for deliverance from such a trouble or affliction, not that we may be the more prepared for obedience, but freed from what is grievous to us, and destroys our pleasure in the world. You wait for good, and it comes not; but is your will brought to a due submission to the will of God about it? Certainly God will have you come to this before you enjoy your desires. Enjoyment of your desires is the thing that will please you, but resignation of your wills is that which is pleasing to God. If your hearts cannot come to this, mercies cannot come to you. Your betters have waited long upon God for mercy, and why should not you? David waited till his eyes failed, Psa. lxxix. 3. Are you better than all the saints that are gone before you? They have quietly waited, and why should not you?—Shall you lose any thing by patient waiting upon God

for mercies? Certainly not; yea, this will turn to a double advantage to you; for though you do not yet enjoy the good you wait for, yet all this while you are exercising your grace; and it is more excellent to exercise grace than to enjoy comfort. And whenever the desired mercy comes, it will be so much the sweeter to you. Are not the mercies you expect from God worth the waiting for? If not, it is your folly to be troubled for the want of them; if they are, why do not you continue waiting? Is it not all that God expects from you, for the mercies he bestows upon you, that you wait upon him for them? You know that you have not deserved the least of them at his hands. You expect them not as a recompense, but a free favour, and if so, then certainly the least you can do is, to wait upon his pleasure for them. Consider how many promises are made in the word to waiting souls. One Scripture calls them *blessed that wait for him*; another tells us, that *none that wait for him shall be ashamed*; and shall we faint in the midst of so many cordials as are prepared to revive us in these promises? How long has God waited upon you? You have made God wait long for your reformation and obedience; and therefore have no reason to think it much, if God makes you wait long for your consolation. If God wait upon you with so much patience for your duties, well may you wait upon him for his mercies. This impatience of yours, expressed in your weariness to wait any longer, as it is a great evil in itself, so very probably it is that evil which obstructs the way of your expected mercies; you might have your mercies sooner, if your spirits were quieter and more submissive.

FLAVEL.

Heaven will fully recompense for all our Trials.

O WHAT a transcendent joy, yea, ravishing, will overrun the hearts of saints when, after so many conflicts, temptations, and afflictions, they arrive in glory, and are harboured in heaven, where they shall rest for ever! The Scripture saith, *They shall sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb*. The song of Moses was a triumphant song composed for the celebration of that glorious deliverance at the Red Sea. The saints are now fluctuating upon a troublesome and tempestuous sea; their hearts sometimes ready to sink, and die within

them, at the apprehension of so many and great dangers and difficulties. Many a hard storm they ride out, and many straits and troubles they here encounter with, but at last they arrive at their desired and long-expected haven, and then heaven rings and resounds with their joyful acclamations. And how can it be otherwise, when as soon as ever they set foot upon that glorious shore, Christ himself meets and receives them with a *Come ye blessed of my Father*. O joyful voice! O much desired word! What tribulation would not a man undergo for this word's sake!...

Cheer up then, O my soul; thy salvation is now nearer than when thou first believedst, and it will not now be long ere I receive the end of my faith; and then it will be sweet to reflect even upon these hardships in the way. Yet a few days more, and then comes that blessed day thou hast so long waited and panted for. Oppose the glory of that day, O my soul, to thy present sufferings, as blessed Paul did, Rom. viii. 18; and thou shalt see how it will shrink them all up to nothing. Oppose the inheritance thou shalt receive in that day, to thy losses for Christ now; and see how joyfully it will make thee bear them; Heb. x. 34. Oppose the honour that will be put upon thee in that day, to thy present reproaches, and see how easy it will make them to thee; 1 Cor. iv. 5. What condition can I be in, wherein the believing thoughts of this blessed day cannot relieve me? Am I poor? here is that which answers poverty. *Hearken, my beloved brethren; Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?* James ii. 5. Am I tempted? here is relief against that: *Now is come salvation and strength; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down*, Rev. xii. 10.

Am I deserted? here is a remedy for that too: *And there shall be no night there*, Rev. xxii. 5. Come, then, my soul, let us enter upon our inheritance by degrees, and begin the life of heaven upon earth.

FLAVEL.

Our present Trials shall end in Praise.

IN all your afflictions believe a safe issue, that you shall get well out of all: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all*, Psalm xxxiv. 19. *These are they which come out of great tribulation*, says

the angel to John, Rev. vii. 14. There is no affliction can enter heaven, but I believe the best talking of affliction that ever was, is in heaven. All the glorified in heaven understand better all God's way with them. They were, many of them, plagued every morning, and chastened every moment; their souls were filled with bitterness and sorrow all their life long; yet there is never a one there, but sees that every thing was well done, there was nothing that they could have been without; their guide guided them well, and there is nothing amiss, nothing crooked in all God's way. It is with respect to this, that the Apostle calls to believers to *rejoice*, though in the midst of *manifold temptations*; why so? knowing that the *trial of your faith*, shall turn to *praise*, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. *Ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations*, that is, as to the things of sense; but, says the Apostle, *ye rejoice with joy unspeakable*, as Christians; and wherefore rejoice in the midst of heaviness? Because your faith, though much exercised now, will make a glorious appearance at the last day. One of the greatest praises that can be given to the Lord by his people, is, that their faith glorified his faithfulness, whilst on earth, in the midst of their greatest distress.

REV. R. TRAILL.

Strength to bear Affliction must be provided beforehand.

STRENGTH to bear affliction must not only shew itself in time of affliction, but it must be provided beforehand; we must be well appointed and furnished with strength against the time of trouble, which must shew itself in bearing of it with patience. The Apostle's words are very direct and plain: he saith, we must be strengthened unto patience. And this is further cleared, Ephes. vi. 10, where the Apostle exhorteth to *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; and presently, in the next words subjoins, that we must be armed, and at all points provided, and *put on the complete armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the assaults of the devil*; And ver. 13; *For this cause*, saith he, *take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to resist in the evil day*: that is, either of temptation or affliction. It is worthy observation, to this purpose, that our Saviour saith, *possess your souls in patience*, Luke xxi. 19. Patience and strength to bear afflictions

must be ours, not by usurpation, nor yet by lawful use and occupation, as a thing borrowed for the present; but by just title and possession, we must have it of our own, we must be provided of it to use when time shall serve.

And the reason and ground of this is, because we cannot have it at any time when we please. The very light of nature teacheth men to provide things of special use beforehand, which they cannot easily come by, when occasion serves to use them.

Now, because the word *provide* is a word of implication, and implies the use of means, for provision is made by means, some may desire more special direction in this case, what means may be used to furnish themselves with strength against the time of trouble and affliction. For the satisfying of their desire, let them know, that the means are not only general, as the word, prayer, &c., serving to work and increase any grace in them; but there be two things that particularly serve as special means to this purpose, to furnish us and give us possession of strength against the time of trouble and affliction.

The first is a frequent and serious consideration of the manner of tenure, in what sort we hold and enjoy the good things of this life, health, wealth, and such like; that it is conditional, that we hold them with condition of the cross, with a limitation of God's correction. We must often think on it, that the promise made that such as fear the Lord shall eat the good things of the land, is with condition of the Lord's trial and correction that they shall eat them, unless it please the Lord otherwise to try and correct them.

Again, we are often to meditate on the immutability of God's love; that his love never changeth, but he is the same good God when he afflicteth us, as when he prospereth any of his children. If we persuade ourselves that we are within the compass of his special love, we must often think upon it, that his love is without change, and that whom he loves once he loves forever. He may change our estate as seems good to him, from prosperity to adversity, but he is the same good God; good before affliction, good in affliction, and ever good to his children.

And if this be thought upon and settled, it will furnish our hearts with a notable measure of Christian courage and forti-

tude: we shall find ourselves enabled with Job's strength, to bear the greatest affliction, Job xiii. 15. These two things then must be thought upon and remembered, that our hold of the good things of this life is conditional, and that God's love is unchangeable, and we shall then be provided of strength against the time of trial and affliction: and know withal, that for want of this preparation, when affliction comes, we shall either grow impatient and seek unlawful means, or else have, it may be, a boldness, but a desperate boldness, without all comfort, such as is commonly in cowards; who, being put to an exigent, are sometimes rashly bold, and desperately hardy. But we shall not be able to be bold with consideration, as the Preacher hath told us, *In the day of wealth be of good comfort, and in the day of affliction consider*, Eccles. vii. 14—that is, consider the author and use of thy affliction. Let us then often think upon our hold of the good things of this life, and the immutability of God's love, that so we may be strengthened to bear, with consideration, the greatest affliction.

REV. E. ELTON.

Against the Indulgence of Fear in seasons of Trials and Difficulties.

CHARGE your consciences solemnly with the authority of the Divine command to suppress your fears. Remember that the exercises of faith, courage, and holy firmness of soul, are duties as well as blessings. Read how often the great God forbids his people to indulge their fears, Isa. xli. 10, 13, 14. xliii. 1—5. xliv. 2—8. *Fear not*, is a command perpetually repeated, because God well knew how prone our feeble natures are to be affrighted at every appearance of danger. And even when he calls his people *Jacob a worm*, and confesses the extreme weakness of their nature under that emblem, yet he insists on the same precepts still, *Fear not, thou worm Jacob*, Isa. xli. 14.

Our blessed Lord joins frequently in the same prohibition of a slavish fear, Matt. x. 28. *Fear not them who can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but fear him, rather, who can destroy body and soul in hell*. And Peter, who once wanted courage, and denied his Lord, in his elder and better days, grew bolder for the name of Christ, and he forbids us *to be afraid or troubled at the terror of men*, 1 Pet. iii.

14. He repeats the charge of the Prophet Isaiah, *Sanctify the Lord of hosts in your heart*; the Lord of hosts alone is the proper object of our supreme fear. This will over-rule and abolish all other fears, as the little noises of earth are lost in the thunders of heaven. The fear of God, in a sublime degree, will be an effectual cure of our sinful fear of creatures.

It is true, the principle of fear is a natural affection, it is rooted in flesh and blood, it grows high and domineers, especially in some constitutions, and when the natural spirits are enfeebled, it still gains the greater ascendancy over us. But if it be indulged and encouraged, it soon becomes sinful, for it seems to stand opposite to the grace of faith, and too often prevails over it. Therefore Christ chides his dis-

ciples, when they were affrighted in the storm, while he was in the ship: *Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?* Mark iv. 40. And even when Peter was walking upon the water, and Christ was near him, he saith, *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt,* Matt. xiv. 31. For a Christian to give himself up to the wild tyranny of his fears is contrary to the very spirit and design of the Gospel of Christ. *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage to fear, but the spirit of adoption, the spirit of power and love,* Rom. viii. 15. Remember then you are the sons and daughters of God. It is below the dignity of your character to yield to this slavery, and your Father himself reproves, and your Redeemer forbids it.

DR. WATTS.

THE END.

